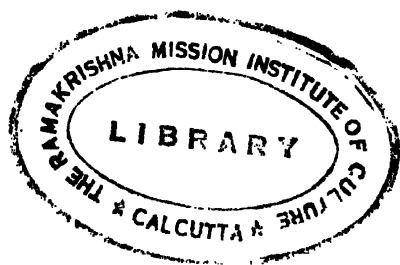


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# THE VEDANTA KESARI

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want  
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold  
The Upanishads and believe that 'I am the Atman.'"

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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## P R A Y E R

ओं नमस्ते सते ते जगत्कारणाय  
नमस्ते चिते सर्वलोकाश्रयाय ।  
नमोऽद्वैततत्त्वाय मुक्तिप्रदाय  
नमो ब्रह्मणे व्यापिने शाश्वताय ॥

त्वमेकं शरण्यं त्वमेकं वरेण्यं  
त्वमेक जगत्पालकं स्वप्रकाशम् ।  
त्वमेकं जगत्कृतृपातृप्रहर्तृ  
त्वमेकं परं निश्चलं निर्विकल्पम् ॥

Om ! Salutations to Thee—the Existence, the Cause of the universe. Salutations to Thee—the Intelligence, the Support of all the world systems. Salutations to Thee—the One Entity without a second, the Giver of salvation. Salutations to Thee—the Brahman, the All-pervading, the Eternal.

Thou art the only Refuge, the only Object of adoration, the one Governor of the universe, the Self-effulgent Being. Thou art the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the universe. Thou art the Highest, the Immovable, the Absolute.

—MAHANIRVANA TANTRA

## SPIRITUAL TALKS WITH SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

[The Swami—who was looked upon by Sri Ramakrishna as his “spiritual son” and was the late President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission—visited Benares in January, 1921. Notes of some of his inspiring conversations held there were taken down by a monastic member in Bengali. They are presented here in translation to our readers.]

P—Maharaj, I am practising Japam and meditation, but I have not yet acquired any taste for these. Somehow or other I am struggling on. What to do, now ?

THE SWAMI—Is it possible to have that taste at the beginning ? No, it is not. Struggle hard to attain to that state of mind. Concentrate all your energies on its achievement, and never for a moment pay heed to other matters. Apply yourself whole-heartedly to it and it alone. Onward, onward ! Never be satisfied with your present mental state. Try to create within yourself a sort of burning dissatisfaction. Speak to yourself, “What progress am I making ? No, not a bit.” Sri Ramakrishna used to say to the Divine Mother, “Mother, another day is gone in vain, and I have not seen Thee !”

Every night before you go to bed, just think for a while how much time you have spent in doing good deeds, how much again in doing useless things ; how much time you have utilised in meditation and how much wasted in idleness. Make your mind strong through Tapasya (austerity) and Brahmacharya (continence).

In a rich man's house, they keep a Darwan (porter) whose duty is to prevent thieves, cows, etc., from entering the compound. Similarly in the case of man, the mind is his Darwan. The stronger the mind becomes, the

better. Mind has also been compared to a turbulent horse. Such a horse generally takes the rider along the wrong path. But he who can check him by holding the reins can go by the right way. Struggle, struggle on ! What are you doing ? Is everything achieved by the mere wearing of the Gerua cloth (ochre-coloured cloth of the Sannyasin) and renunciation of hearth and home ? What have you realised ? Time is flying. Do not waste a single moment any more. You will be able to work hard another three or four years at the most. Afterwards both the body and the mind will become weak and infirm and you won't be able to do anything. What can be achieved without diligence ?

You are thinking, " Let us first of all have yearning, faith and devotion, and then we shall be doing our Sadhana (spiritual practices)." Is it ever possible ? Can we see the light unless there is the break of dawn ? When the Lord comes, love, devotion and faith follow Him like His retinue. Can anything be achieved without Tapasya ? Brahma at first heard—" Tapas (meditate), Tapas (meditate), Tapas (meditate)." Do you not see what a severe Tapasya even the Avataras (incarnations of God) had to perform ? Has anybody gained anything without labour ? Buddha, Sankara and others—what tremendous austerities they practised in their lives ! What a burning renunciation they possessed ! What a severe Sadhana they performed !

Faith cannot be had in the beginning. First realisation, then comes faith. But, at first, the Sadhaka (aspirant) has to pin his faith—" blind faith " it may be—to the precepts of his Guru (spiritual teacher) as also of some great souls, and then only can he advance towards the goal.

Do you not know the parable of the oyster as told by Sri Ramakrishna ? The oyster floats about on the surface of the sea with its shell wide open only for a drop

of the Swati-rain\*. As soon as it gets a rain drop, it dives down to the ocean-bed and there forms a fine pearl. Like the oyster, you too should be up and doing and should dive deep into the ocean of meditation.

You have no self-reliance. Personal exertion is an indispensable factor for success in spiritual life. Do something for a period of at least four years. And then if you do not make any tangible progress, come and take me to task.

No Japam and meditation are possible unless you transcend the limitations of Rajas and Tamas. Afterwards you are to rise above Sattwa even, and attain to a high spiritual plane from where there is no return.

How difficult is the attainment of human birth ! No other beings can have the highest knowledge in their lives. It is in this human birth only that God-realisation is possible. Strive hard in this very life and reach that state from which you will not have to come back.

The mind is to be raised, step by step, from the gross state to the subtle, then to the causal state, still further to the Great Cause (Mahakarana) and finally to Samadhi (highest illumination). Resign yourself fully to the Lord. He is everything. There is nothing besides. सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म 'Verily all this is Brahman.' Everything is His and His only. Never be calculating. Is self-surrender possible in a day ? When that is achieved, everything is achieved. One must struggle hard for it.

Life is eternal. The span of man's life is at the most a hundred years. Give up the pleasures of these hundred years, if you want to enjoy eternal life and with it eternal bliss.

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\*Rain falling when the star Swati or Arcturus is in the ascendant.

## EDITORIAL NOTES

### OUR NEW YEAR

**T**HROUGH the grace of Providence the *Vedanta Kesari* enters its thirteenth year with the current number. On this happy occasion we send our most cordial greetings to all our readers and friends whose steady support has enabled us to render our humble service to the great cause of the Eternal Religion of India. And we request them all to join us in our heartfelt prayer to the Almighty whose divine will has brought the journal into being and has been sustaining it all along, even in the midst of the most trying circumstances. Let us all also offer our obeisance to the world's saints and sages in the inspired words of Swami Vivekananda—"Our salutations go to all the past prophets, whose teachings and lives we have inherited, whatever might have been their race and clime. Our salutations go to all those men and women, God-like, who are working to help humanity, whatever be their race, colour or birth. Our salutations to those who are coming in the future, living gods, to work unselfishly for our descendants." The responsibility that rests on us is very great. And we earnestly invite all our well-wishers to share it and co-operate with us in carrying on the Mission of the Vedanta with greater efficiency and success.

### VEDANTA—THE ESSENCE OF HINDU RELIGION

Vedanta—the quintessence of the Eternal Religion of India, popularly known as Hinduism—preaches to discordant and distracted humanity the message of unity and peace. It teaches man the eternal verity first realised by the Rishis of Vedic India—एकं सत् विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति "Truth is one, sages call it variously." It speaks to us of the glory of the infinite, eternal and deathless Soul, of the potential Divinity of man and woman, and of the spiritual solidarity of the whole human race. It asks us to be fearless, and to stand on the strength of the Atman, instead of perpetually depending in a slavish manner on extraneous helps. It is the rationale of religion and philosophy. It is not a mere religion railing constantly at philosophy, nor a philosophy carrying on an eternal warfare



with religion, as in the West. It is, on the other hand, the synthesis of the two, springing as it does from the direct vision of the Ultimate Reality and tending also to the same goal. It is the product of the religious genius, not of a single individual, but of the whole Hindu race. It does not preach religious imperialism to be obtained through the ascendancy of a particular faith. It proclaims on the other hand the harmony of religions which are in reality different expressions of the one Eternal Religion. It places before us the cosmic principle manifesting itself in the super-human personalities whom the world worships as its greatest prophets and teachers. It further gives us the very basis of morality and duty. It teaches us to love others not only as ourselves, but as our very Self. As the Upanishadic sages declared—"He who sees his Self in all beings, and all beings in his Self, cannot hate anybody." Nay, love spontaneously springs from the heart of such a seer of the Truth towards all beings in whom he realises the One. The Vedanta further proclaims to us the great truth that the direct vision of the "Infinite Self-effulgent Being, who is beyond all darkness" can alone bring to us a peace and blessedness that can for ever put an end to the miseries of existence. No wonder then that Prof. Deussen, a keen student of the Vedanta that he was, very eloquently observed—"The Vedanta in its unfalsified form is the strongest support of pure morality, is the greatest consolation in the sufferings of life and death—Indians, keep to it!"

#### NEGLECT OF RELIGION

The whole world stands to-day in need of the universal teachings of the Vedanta. But India herself needs it more urgently than other lands at this critical period of her history, distressed as she is by dissensions at home and the onrush of material culture from outside. It is a great pity that her own children are forgetting the glory of their unique heritage and have been drifting away more and more from the moorings of their eternal faith. Religion, or rather Dharma, to use a more accurate and comprehensive term, has been the keynote of the music of Indian life, individual and collective. It is this Dharma that is now being sadly neglected and its efficacy even questioned at times! With many, religion consists in thoughtlessly clinging to dead forms and ceremonies as opposed to the spirit which ennobles and emancipates the soul. Others again are throwing to the winds both form and spirit,

and are taking pride in following a meaningless cosmopolitanism which exerts no elevating influence on their thought and action. True religion is understood by very few. This is indeed deplorable in a land where Dharma should be the guiding principle of life.

#### RELIGION NOT AT FAULT

With the decadence of Dharma and neglect of the cultural ideals of Varna and Ashrama there exists now only a travesty of the grand socio-religious system as built up by the sages of ancient India. Owing to the loss of the intensive spirit of religion there have arisen within the fold of Hinduism certain activities which are bringing weakness and disunion among our people. Some of our present-day movements which have taken up the Brahmin and non-Brahmin questions, high caste and depressed class problems and other communal and sectional questions, instead of alleviating the social diseases sapping our vitality, are positively aggravating them by the use of wrong remedies. There is a tendency in modern times to make religion responsible for all our ills, social, economical or political. And some people even propose the banishment of religion altogether from our social life as the only means of our salvation. Religion being the soul of the Indian people, this suggested step is nothing short of taking the life of the social organism in order to cure its disease ! But this need not be done at all. "Religion," as Swami Vivekananda clearly pointed out, "is not a fault; but it is the Pharisees and Sadducees in Hinduism who invent all sorts of engines of tyranny. . . . I claim that no destruction of religion is necessary to improve the Hindu society, and that this state of society exists not on account of religion, but because that religion has not been applied to society as it should have been." And so is the case of other faiths.

#### PRACTICAL VEDANTA—A NECESSITY

All our present ills are the outcome of the low vitality of our social body. Strength must be infused into it. We have to shake off our faint-heartedness, throw overboard many a superstition and evil practice, re-assert our lost individuality, and recover our faith in ourselves and in God. A new life and vigour is to be made to pulsate through the veins of every member of our society. Great stress should be laid now on

cultural and spiritual growth. The trouble with us has been not the dearth of ideals, but the want of proper application of the principles of our religion to our practical life. We do not care for a religion which merely preaches the "quietism of indifference." We want the true, practical Vedanta which places before us an active, creative ideal that can transform and elevate our life, can inspire us all to serve the God in man and woman, particularly in the poor and the down-trodden, and can ultimately bring us face to face with the Truth. We do not want a "cramped" religion that divides man from man and leads to strifes and dissensions among brothers and sisters. We want the universal religion that will enable us to realise the fundamental unity of the vast complexus of systems which make up the Hindu religion as also all other religions of the world.

#### HINDUISM—A COSMIC RELIGION

India's eternal religion is to be re-interpreted in its true spirit to her sons and daughters. The present lack of interest in religion is due to no small extent to ignorance which clouds the minds not only of the students but also of those who pose as their teachers. This is the tragedy of our modern religious life. A great misunderstanding exists in the minds of the Hindus themselves about the very essentials of their religion. The idea of many modern educated Hindus about their own faith is very queer, to use a mild term. And what is worse, they often accept as infallible the thoughtless criticisms of the paid scribes of creedal religions and come to believe that Hinduism is nothing but "a bewildering medley of beliefs and practices" without any uniformity of creed, rites and ceremonies. Nothing can be farther from the truth. The real fact is that on the bed-rock of eternal principles is built the vast edifice of Hinduism with its innumerable flights of stairs, flats and compartments, all leading to the one vast terrace which brings one in direct touch with the infinite sky, or rather the Akasa of Brahman—whose glory the Vedic sages proclaim so clearly : "He is below ; He is above ; He is behind ; He is before ; He is on the right ; He is on the left. The Governor of Times—past and future, He is the same to-day as (He will be) to-morrow." Hinduism recognises the necessity of idols, sound-symbols as also pure mental worship. But all these are different steps to the highest spiritual experience beyond the province of sense, speech and

thought. The Hindu religion possesses a great variety of rituals and ceremonials, doctrines and dogmas, ethics and philosophies—all these being “strung in God like a row of jewels on a thread.” As the thoughtful editor of the *Indian Social Reformer* of Bombay, a great admirer of all the great religions of the world, put it succinctly—“Hinduism is a cosmic religion, not a personal, or national, ethnic or ethical religion. It has its personal, national, ethnic and ethical aspects. But they are incidental and consequential. Above and beyond and beneath them all is the universal, the cosmic principle from which all the sects and schisms draw their spiritual sustenance, and in which they all find, in spite of their differences and conflicts, their central affinity.”

#### FREEDOM OF THOUGHT IN HINDUISM

What some superficial critics call the defect of Hinduism, is really its merit. It is an acknowledged law in the spiritual world that the spring of inspiration ceases to flow the moment religious life is standardised, and the individual is denied the chance of expressing his potentialities in the way most suited to his temperament and tendencies. Fortunately there is in the Hindu religion, as distinct from the society, a freedom of thought which is the first condition of all spiritual growth. This is the chief reason why the ancient religion of India is still producing saints and sages of the first magnitude, while the creedal religions, in spite of the uniformity of their doctrines and ceremonies, seem to be practically barren in this respect. Hinduism, therefore, has no necessity to believe in the theories of “the only begotten son of God” or of “the messenger with final and complete revelation.” It holds on the other hand that great teachers are born for the establishment of Dharma, whenever there is its decline or the rise of Adharma, as Sri Krishna declares in the Gita. Thus in accordance with the law of creative evolution, which Hinduism fully recognises, great spiritual giants are still being born to proclaim the eternal religion of India in a way suited to the growing needs of the times, thereby enabling the religious life of the people to adapt itself to the ever-changing environments. Besides, a particular prophet cannot appeal to the religious consciousness of the whole human race. So also a particular philosophy, mythology or ritual. Religion to be worth its name must satisfy the various types of aspirants and help them in their onward march to perfection. In

spite of the strenuous efforts of religious zealots piously wishing to convert the whole world to their own faiths, all the world-religions seem to be prospering. The number of religions and that of the various creeds and sects within their folds do not show any sign of decrease. This clearly indicates that there is a psychological necessity for this diversity of religious paths. But this variety need not necessarily mean discord. In fact there lies a grand unity at its back.

#### DIFFERENT TYPES OF RELIGIOUS MEN

Human mind is no doubt a synthetic whole. But it has its various faculties of "knowledge, will and feeling," developed in varying degrees in different individuals. It is therefore that there often exists a wide divergence in temperament and receptivity among the aspirants. Anyway, religion to be vital must be presented in the language of the individual's soul and in a form calculated to satisfy his psychological needs. In the world of religion there are various types of men. To give a few illustrations : The person of a philosophic bent of mind will rather go without religion than stifle his reason. He wants to weigh everything and proceed in his search after the truth until he realises that "a learned ignorance is the end of philosophy" and the beginning of spiritual life. There is again the man of active temperament who finds expression for his tremendous energy in acts of charity and other forms of selfless work. He is a matter-of-fact man and does not care much for the play of emotion. Then again there is the contemplative man endowed with a gigantic will. He wants to control his nature, both external and internal, and realise his Self in Samadhi. There is further the man of devotional temperament, a poetic soul, yearning for the love of God. He wants forms and symbols, flowers and incense, and these he finds very helpful in his path of devotion. He probably avoids the path of reasoning, which, he fears, will dry up the spring of his sentiments and feelings.

#### ALL-COMPREHENSIVE NATURE OF HINDUISM

There is in fact an infinite variety of temperaments passing through different grades of spiritual evolution. Hinduism, unlike other religions with their more or less stereotyped systems, supplies the spiritual food to all these various types of minds. Sir Monier Williams has paid a glowing tribute to this

many-sidedness of the Hindu religion, which should serve as an eye-opener to many :—"Hinduism has something to offer which is suited to all minds. Its very strength lies in its infinite adaptability to the infinite diversity of human character and human tendencies. It has its high spiritual and abstract side suited to the metaphysical philosopher ; its practical and concrete side suited to the man of affairs, . . . its æsthetic and ceremonial side suited to the man of poetic feeling and imagination, its quiescent and contemplative side suited to the man of peace and lover of seclusion." God, with His personal and impersonal, immanent and transcendent aspects, is the common goal of all Hindu sects and creeds, which, in the words of the Hindu devotee, like different streams flowing towards the sea, through crooked or straight paths, lead to Him and Him alone. Nay, He is the ultimate end of all religions.

#### THE MESSAGE OF UNITY AND FELLOWSHIP

This grand truth was boldly proclaimed by Sri Ramakrishna—the great modern prophet of religious synthesis and harmony : "The religious teachers of all countries and races receive their inspiration from the one Almighty source. As one can ascend to the roof of a house by means of a ladder, or a bamboo, or a staircase, or in various other ways, so diverse are the ways and means to approach God. Every religion in the world is one of the ways to reach Him." This is the great message of the Eternal Religion of India to the whole world. The spread of this message is producing a tremendous change in Hinduism itself. It is also serving as a most beneficent agency leading to a better understanding, among the thoughtful members of our warring sects and creeds in India. It is bringing about a tolerant attitude even in the Christian missionary mind. It will, we hope, solve at least in its religious aspect, our Hindu-Moslem problem which appears to be so enigmatic to many. In the West the propagation of this message is slowly enabling men and women to understand more deeply than before the religions of others as also their own. Many are coming to believe, as Mr. Wells does, in "a common world religion, very much simplified and universalised and better understood. This will not be Christianity nor Islam nor Buddhism, nor any such specialised form of religion, but religion itself, pure and undefiled." Here we see, as Schopenhauer rightly anticipated, the signs of a revolution in thought more widespread and intensive than that brought about

by the Renaissance of Greek literature. May all nations and races realise the underlying harmony of religions! May equality and brotherhood of man be established on the secure foundation of the fellowship of faiths, on the bed-rock of the Eternal Principles which it has been the proud privilege of the Vedanta to proclaim all over the world! May the appeal to unity as made by the Vedic Rishi find a response in the hearts of all!

समानी व आकृतिस्समाना हृदयानि वः ।

समानमस्तु बो मनो यथा वस्तुसहासति ॥

“Common be your desires, united be your hearts, united be your intention, so that there be a thorough union among you.”

Om Shantih !      Om Shantih !!      Om Shantih !!!

## THE IDEAS, IDEALS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION\*

BY SRIMAT SWAMI SARADANANDA

**W**HETHER he wishes it or not, man from his very birth finds himself concerned, confronted and conjoined always with two mysterious, vast, indefinite objects—the internal and the external world, or to speak more accurately, with two sets of phenomena, of which, learning in time to get a collective outlook, he comes to a sort of indefinite knowledge of the existence of two separate worlds, the internal and the external, and finds them acting and reacting on each other through him. His body, mind and ego forming part and parcel of them both, he finds himself to be the mysterious joining point or the connecting link between the two.

Proceeding in time to search after and find out the truth about them, he sees naturally that two paths of inquiry are open to him—the subjective and the objective. And the former of these seeming nearer and more likely to lead him to truth, he begins to advance rapidly through it. “Know

\*A speech delivered by the Swami at the recent Ramakrishna Math and Mission Convention.

thy own Self, Know That by knowing which you will know the mystery of everything in this universe,"—became the motto at one time throughout the civilised world. The old Vedic Rishis, Kapila, Krishna and Buddha in India, Laotze in China, Socrates in Greece, Jesus Christ in Jerusalem and many others in Egypt and other countries, joined in the quest and added from time to time the results of their researches to the knowledge the human race possessed of Philosophy and Metaphysics. Considering well what little objective knowledge mankind had at the time, they came to the conclusion that it would never be possible to know the ultimate Reality through that path and took to the lines of deep meditation, of self-introspection and self-control to reach the goal. The terms in which they expressed the ultimate Reality after realisation, however, come so near to and are so much alike to one another that they lead us to think that each one of the great ancient seers must have arrived exactly at the same point of the mental plane to get a similar view of the underlying Truth or Reality. Ancient history records the fact that all those great seers of old, Kapila, Krishna, Buddha, Socrates, Jesus and others, used to dive so deep within themselves while following the introspective method of meditation, that they used to have trances, or that they forgot the existence of the outside world and of their own body during the time. It appears also from them that India used to be ahead of other countries in following this subjective path.

The sum and substance of the results obtained by the old seers at different times may be summed up as follows : That the ego in man is but a limited expression of the permanent part of him, the Soul or Self or Atman or Brahman; that the Atman or Brahman is the unlimited universal substratum of everything and therefore it is one without a second ; that the highest illumination is attained on realising one's oneness with this Atman or ultimate Reality ; that the impersonal Atman or Brahman appears to us as the universe and the personal God in our attempts to know It through our limited mind and intellect. These results, of course, were obtained by following the method for many many centuries, of which history gives us but a very imperfect record. In the meantime, the objective knowledge of the human race went on increasing and accumulating, and the advance of trade and commerce brought in facilities for interchange and spread of thoughts and ideas.



The historians of the West give us the idea that the attempt to reach the Truth by the objective method was not resorted to by the human race until a little after the Renaissance, when the human mind found itself free, for the first time, from its old moorings in Europe. The writings of the distinguished European authors of that period and a little after that time, e. g., the *Novum Organum* of Lord Bacon, they cite as testifying to the fact. However true it might be for the Western countries, India has a different account of its own on this point. The Western savants have not yet been able to find how old the civilisation of India is, in spite of their different assertions about it from time to time. They have been compelled to push it back several thousand years by the findings of certain excavations quite recently made in some parts of Western India, and it seems probable that they will have to alter their present conclusions also in time. It is best for us, therefore, to hold fast to the old traditions prevalent in the country and to the records which our scriptures and old books supply us on the point.

Swami Vivekananda seemed to hold the opinion that Indian civilisation was the oldest on the globe, and that all other countries were indebted to the Vedas of India for the idea of the immortality of the Soul of man and its oneness with the ultimate Reality underlying the universe. We can have our own opinion regarding the same and wait to accept it until it has been proved clearly by the evidence of history. But the great strides that India made of old to develop her objective knowledge proves clearly the fact that far from ignoring it, she used to pursue it with great zeal in almost every direction, centuries before the Renaissance in Europe. Her researches with plants and metals in the field of medicine, her surgery and astronomy, her theory of the creation of the universe from atoms, and speculations regarding the nature of them, as are to be found in the Vaiseshika philosophy, her methods of ship-building and navigation and the principles for organised, successful government of a country, as are to be found in her old books, all tend to prove the fact.

Liberty of thought and action was never put down by law in old India, in the field of religion and philosophy or in pursuing one's research in any kind of knowledge. What they wanted strictly from every individual of the community was to subscribe to the rules and customs of society, and to the

belief in the sanctity and the truth of the records of super-conscious experiences of the great seers, that are to be found in the Vedas, and especially in the Vedanta part of it. And it seems that this belief in the authority of the Vedas arose after the nation had found repeatedly convincing proofs about it in the lives of the devotees who had followed them with sincere and earnest zeal, and after the attainment of the supreme stage of super-consciousness had been rendered into a perfect science by the religious leaders. Thus we find knowledge divided principally into two main divisions, the Para and the Apra—the higher, by which the unlimited, ultimate Reality or the absolute, unchangeable Truth could be realised, and the lower, by which relative truths regarding all objects within the boundaries of time, space and causation such as music, painting, sculpture, architecture, in short everything were gained.

In Europe and the far West where the spiritual ideals were upheld only by the monasteries and the freedom of thought of the masses was very much curbed, the Renaissance brought in a terrible reaction. Everything relating to the subjective method was thrown overboard, and the educated lost all faith in religion and the super-conscious state. Rebellion against the church and the priests became the order everywhere, and the society went through convulsions, the like of which they had never seen before. The objective method of realising truths was then resorted to with all avidity and was taken up as the panacea for all evils.

History has recorded the fact that the pursuance of the objective method brings material prosperity in its train. India had been the centre of that prosperity for a long time. That centre has changed now to Europe and the Western countries, after they had followed that path for a few centuries. The ranks in society in them became gradually divided and established from now on individual rights and on money basis, and material prosperity at any cost became the motto of the European nations. Wealth and prosperity overflowed the countries, but in place of peace and contentment brought in an unbounded desire for gain and power and made the struggle for existence keener every day. The discontent went on increasing and began to express itself from time to time in various parts of Europe, through more and more demands of the people for individual and collective rights. It beheaded

kings, overthrew empires, spread the horrors of revolution in France and other countries, and still the people thought they were advancing in the right direction towards a higher civilisation and to ever-lasting peace through respecting the rights of one another. Even women caught the contagion and ranged themselves against men in suffragette bands and tried to wrest from them more privileges and rights for their sex, until at last came the Great War and proved the utter futility of basing society and civilisation on the ideals on which they had been building so long.

However much we may extol the objective method, hypnotised by the glamour of the material prosperity of the Western civilisation, we shall have to admit the fact that nowhere has it yet enabled man to reach the ultimate Reality and thereby to attain to everlasting peace and contentment by controlling the desires of the flesh. In ancient India the objective method was followed with vigour, but was never allowed to delude the mind with an undue importance and to transcend its boundaries. With due respect for the path, it was always confined to its own place of discovering relative truths and laws and the applications of them to make human life rich and comfortable. But the basic principles of individual, social and national life were always taken from the great conclusions arrived at by following the subjective method. Self-control was the foundation on which life's whole structure rested, and the ranks in society were measured and divided by that unit of standard. Money and the comforts of life had their value, but a life of renunciation for a noble ideal was regarded much higher and commanded the esteem of all grades of society. Thus poverty had never been the stumbling-block to the recognition of one's greatness in society, and "plain living and high thinking" was always held up as the ideal. Then again the doctrine of Karma and reincarnation—that we are reaping the results of what we sowed in our former incarnation and will have to reap in our next birth what we are sowing in this—kept the people from being discontented with their own lot and getting jealous of their neighbours. And above all, the rules for regulating the daily life of the individual and society were always framed with the view that they might rise higher gradually and be fitted in future for a life of perfect self-control and renunciation that are necessary for realising the Atman within or the ultimate Reality.

The outlook and consideration of human life and its different activities from the two standpoints of absolute and relative Reality enabled them to set a proper value on things and events and warded off the danger that came through an over-estimate of them. Thus comprising and combining the subjective with the objective view of things, the Paramarthika with the Vyavaharika, the Ideal grew and became clear in men's minds. And the way too, was found by which all kinds of Karma could be made to lead both the individual and the community to the realisation of the goal, the super-conscious state.

Times there were when by the attractions of the flesh and the self-forgetfulness and vanity which material power and prosperity bring, the people were led astray from this ideal of life, but the Lord has always been kind to India and in His mercy has always kept His promise to the people to reincarnate Himself when needed for the re-establishment of righteousness. The Great Ones whom India has been worshipping all along as incarnations of the Deity, from the dreaded Rama with the terrible axe, to Kapila, Krishna, Buddha, Sankara and others, have everyone of them appeared at such critical periods in the national life of India and have either brought the people back to the ideal of renunciation or helped them to proceed towards that Ideal by removing the hindrances that obstructed their path. Thus the ship of the national life in India had been sailing through rough and calm waters in its voyage to find a safe haven in the "eternal Rock of Ages," the absolute Reality in and beyond the universe, protected by the all-merciful hand of Providence, until the time came for its facing the roughest weather of all after the great Sankara had left its helm in other hands.

Vast and various were the evils that had entered into the body of the nation when Sankara began his reform work during the period of the downfall of Buddhism. It seems that the preachers of that religion had had to lower their ideal in many places to bring the nations of Northern Asia with little or no ethical standard whatsoever into the fold. They had to compromise truth with half-truths, the pure light of religion and renunciation with the prevalent local customs, habits and superstitions. Thus the enormous and extensive spread of that religion was then made at the cost of its intense spirit of sacrifice for what was true and noble. The infirmities of the adherents had gradually entered the ranks of the teachers,

and in time the people and the preachers of India also had been affected with the same evils by their communication with them. Increase of inter-marriage had produced among the people a great many mixed or sub-castes in different grades of development, and it became a question of time and spread of culture to weld them into one homogeneous whole. Rules were then framed for not going outside of India to prevent this medley of confusion getting worse. But they could not prevent the coming over and frequent invasions of the sturdy barbarian hordes of Chins, Huns, Sakas and the rest who had been living in Middle and Northern Asia. Many of these conquerors settled in India and made the problem of uniting the people into one nation more complex.

And before the country had time to settle those internal affairs and establish itself firmly as before on the Vedic ideals, in came the invasion of the Yavanas or the Greeks, and a little later, of the Pathans and the Moghuls. And the dark age for India was complete when during and after the downfall of the great Moghul, the supremacy of the country was partly handed over to, and partly wrested from the native chiefs by, the British power.

Bound hand and foot, despoiled of all her wealth, power and knowledge by foreign hands, hypnotised by material power and the false glamour of the two-days' material civilisation of the West, in abject misery lies she, the Queen adored of nations, the mother of heroes and spiritual giants, nay, of God-men, who had rendered holy this little planet of ours by using it as their foot-stool—she who had helped her neighbours with religion, knowledge, both subjective and objective, and had never spread devastation and ruin in other lands in the name of conquest ! And is there no hope, none whatever ? And has the God of India forgotten her and His promise to her of old ? The night darkened, and the bonds tightened more than ever ! And sometime in 1836, in going to determine the kind of culture and education that should be given to her children to enable them to free her and raise her to her former glory, it was settled that Western education, imparted through the medium of the English language, would be the best under the circumstances ! Aye, even the genius of Raja Ram Mohan Roy subscribed to introduce that foreign language, and as the Swami Vivekananda said, “helped to set the nation back for fifty years or more thereby ! The country

would have received the Western method of education and the objective sciences of the West in a few years, had he but translated the Western books into Sanskrit and made that language the medium of instruction."

But God in His mercy for poor India heard her prayers! And the 18th February of that same year (1836) saw the birth of that great personality in a wayside village in Bengal, who by his unique realisations in the field of religion and unprecedented spiritual powers helped to convince the people of the country of the greatness of the old Indian Ideal and prevented the national bark from proceeding any further towards the rocks and sands of the materialistic civilisation of the West. Without getting any aid from the much-vaunted education of modern times, he by his innate spiritual powers saw light where the best of the book-educated university-men of the day found only darkness. From the high transcendental super-conscious plane in which he passed his days, the absolute Self, God, the Soul of man, and their relation with one another, the object of creation, of human life and its activities, and the way by which that object is best fulfilled—appeared clear as things in daylight. And he used to talk about those things incessantly to all who gathered round him, in such a simple language and with such pointed similes, aphorisms and parables, that the meaning, becoming clear and palpable to everyone, would touch and carry impression into the hearts of all. We shall take the opportunity of telling you here what the Swami Vivekananda thought about this towering personality and the ideal that has been manifested in and through his godly life for the benefit of India and humanity at large.

"Many times in the past had India passed through downfalls which had left her stunned and bewildered, and the God of India had for as many times protected and restored life and vigour into her by manifesting Himself unto her in His mercy. But those past downfalls appear light and trivial, compared with the depths to which she has fallen at present. Never had this holy land been enveloped before with such a long night of deep and dismal misery. But it is almost over now and soon will its darkness wane before the radiant rays of the dawn.

"And the re-awakening of the country will be in proportion to this unprecedented fall, and the mighty manifestation of strength and vigour of the present rise will put

into insignificance all the past revivals. They will be shorn of their glory and importance as stars before the sun.

“ For, to teach people the religion practised by the Aryans and to show them the common ground of unity among the apparently divided sects that, coming into existence in different times and places and with different social rules and customs, lie scattered all over the country and are quarrelling always with one another regarding the principles of religion, and yet all of which go by the common name of Hinduism—the Lord has manifested Himself again as Sri Ramakrishna. Yea, holding within himself the realisations of the Sanatana Dharma of the Vedas, the principles of which on application were found to be true for all times and places, he has appeared in this new incarnation as the living embodiment of the eternal and universal religion itself for the benefit of humanity.

“ To prove that the super-conscious knowledge that is ever existent in the Lord, reveals itself always to the perfectly pure in spirit, even though devoid of all book-learning, and that the scriptures are true inasmuch as they are the records of the same, he has in this incarnation risen to that knowledge through faith in God and purity, discarding all help that any form of book-learning can give.

“ In this present dispensation suited to the age lies the source of infinite good for India, as well as for the whole world ; and the founder of it, Sri Ramakrishna, is the reformed and remodelled manifestation of all the great Masters of religion of the past. O man, have faith in this. . . . From the worship of the dead past we invite you to the worship of the living present. ”

Nowhere in the past history of the world have we come across the fact of any of the great teachers of religion trying to find out what truth there is in the various paths through which men are travelling towards the religious goals, since the dawn of religion and religious ideas in this planet of ours. Sri Ramakrishna alone had the inclination and boldness to try the same in our time, by taking initiation from the professed teachers of almost all the prevalent great religions of the world, Hinduism, Mahomedanism and Christianity, one after another, realising the goal of one before proceeding to realise the goal of the others. And the results of his research have tolled the death-knell of all religious intolerance and bigotry

that have filled men and nations with hatred towards one another.

The realisations of Sri Ramakrishna can be summed up briefly as follows—

(a) Every sincere devotee of any religion whatsoever will have to pass through the three stages of dualism, qualified monism and ultimately monism.

(b) As all jackals howl in the same pitch, so all devotees of any religion whatsoever have declared in the past and will continue to do so in the future, their oneness with the Deity on realising the heights of monism.

(c) That there need not be any quarrel between dualism, qualified monism and monism, for each comes in turn to every devotee in accordance with the growth and development of his spiritual life.

(d) The positive part of every religion, in which are found the way and the method of procedure through that way, as well as the goal which a sincere follower of that way would reach in the end—is true. But the negative, which speaks of punishment and damnation, eternal or otherwise, for the straggler, is not so, being added to the former for keeping the members of the community from deserting and straying into other folds.

(e) That religion can be transmitted to others by will and touch by the great teachers.

(f) In the Sanatana Dharma of the Vedanta are to be found the eternal principles and laws that govern every single manifestation of religion in a particular time, place and environment.

(g) Stick to your own religion, and think that the followers of other religions are coming to the same goal through different paths.

Thus the Ideal suited to the age was completed after twelve long years of unheard-of struggle and renunciation, and the Great Master knew that at last the time was ripe for the coming of those who would get the direct touch of his spirit and carry the Ideal everywhere in India and abroad. They came, and he knew each one of them as if he was long acquainted with them. And to the one whom he chose to make the leader of them all, when he said how he had been waiting impatiently to meet him, for he had come to know that the



Divine Mother would make him the instrument to perform Her great work of uplifting India and other countries—he could not believe on account of the sceptical spirit of western education which he had imbibed before. Strange as it is, it is not the first time that we have heard of such things about the great Masters of religion. Sankara, Chaitanya and others did the same, and Jesus not only knew his disciples, but said when he met Peter, “Upon this rock shall I build my temple !”

So the Master went on training those young men and left them in 1886, giving directions to the leader, the Swami Vivekananda, for the spread of his great message. Gentlemen, I need not enter into great details henceforth. You all know how, fired with love for their great Master and zeal for his message, this little band of young, energetic workers, without a single piece of copper in their pocket, went barefooted almost all over India, knowing not what to eat or where to lie down, month after month and year after year; how the great message spread itself gradually; how in 1893 the Swami Vivekananda went to America to represent Hinduism in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago; how by the inscrutable ways of the Divine Mother, the object of that august assembly was turned as it were and made to suit and serve the purpose of the advent of the Swami before the public and proclaim the glory of Hinduism; and how winning laurel after laurel for Mother India and Hinduism in America and England, he returned to India in 1897 and started the Ramakrishna Mission.

The Swami started the Mission at first with both the lay and monastic disciples of the Master. But the former took little interest in it after a year or two, and ultimately all the work of the Mission was transferred into the hands of the monks of this Math. The Mission was started by the Swami for spreading the religious Ideal of Sri Ramakrishna by interpreting the scriptures in the light of the great Master's life and realisations and with his idea of service to humanity, looking upon human beings as images of God, nay as God Himself. So preaching and philanthropic activities were the two main divisions of the Mission. But what the Swami wanted of each one of us was to do the works of those two divisions in the spirit of Karma-Yoga or perfect unselfishness by idealising not only the work itself but also the men and women with whom

we come in contact in the course of its performance and for whom we do it, regarding them as the Deity Himself. But how to preach and teach and serve if we give up the idea that they need them? And the answer is that your scripture teaches you to look upon not only the Deity as perfect, but also every part of Him.

What if He has preferred to appear before you as imperfect—as sick and miserable and ignorant and starving—to give you the opportunity of getting yourself benefited by serving Him in those shapes? Thus we shall have to do the preaching, teaching and serving in that light. It will protect us from getting vain with the idea of our own importance in going to help others, and make us more and more unselfish as we go on doing the work in that spirit, and will enable us ultimately, to realise the Vedanta idea that the Universe and *every* bit of it is God and nothing but God. No work is good or bad in itself, but the motive with which we proceed to do it makes it so. The same work which brings bondage upon bondage when we proceed to do it with selfish motives, frees us and makes us rise higher and higher when we do it with perfectly unselfish motives and with no idea of gain to us, even of name and fame.

Thus the Ramakrishna Mission teaches us to do all works with the highest of motives. Are you a householder? Then look upon your wife and children as images of God and serve them with your whole heart. Are you a monk? Then look upon all human beings as incarnations of God and serve them with all your might, and it will help you to rise to the super-conscious state. Are you a patriot? Then give up all petty jealousies and heart-burnings which limit your vision, and work incessantly to make your country really great by helping to stand on what is true and noble. Thus to reach the super-conscious goal by renunciation and service and to help others to do the same, are what the Mission teaches every one of us. To teach men to stand firm on the Ideal that has been given to us as our precious inheritance by Sri Ramakrishna, and then to learn and apply the relative truths that the West has discovered to improve the material condition of India—are what the Mission enjoins on every one of us.

Such is the Ideal of the Ramakrishna Mission, and such the ideas which it wants to work out for the good of humanity. May He, whose unique spiritual life is the inspiring Ideal be-

hind the Mission and also he, who has shown us how to apply that Ideal practically in our daily lives, bless us and give us light and strength to follow in their footsteps for the real welfare of India and our own selves.

## SRI RAMANUJA'S CONCEPTION OF MUKTI\*

BY PROF. P. N. SRINIVASACHARI, M. A.

**R**AMANUJA deduces his philosophy of Modified Monism from the principles of Realism (Sat Khyati), co-ordination (Samanadhikaranam) and organic unity (Sareera-sareeri Sambandha), Bhakti Prapatti (self-surrender) and Krama Mukti (progressive realisation). He insists on the equal validity of all Vedic texts and bases his Siddhanta (doctrines) on the authority of immemorial tradition, logical consistency and religious satisfaction. Every experience, subjective and objective, is a predication of Reality and not Its contradiction. Predication itself presupposes the co-ordination of different elements involving spiritual and temporal distinctions. The Jiva from this point of view becomes a *sui generis* relation or essential mode of Iswara (Aprithaksiddha Viseshana) and becomes a living tissue of God (Sareera-sareeri Sambandha). The realisation of this truth results in an attribute of absolute surrender to His redemptive love and grace and enables the Prapanna to ascend by the luminous levels of celestial regions to the transcendental region of bliss known as Paramapada (supreme state) from which there is no more return to the sorrows of Samsara (earthly existence). Freed from the fictions of flesh, the Jiva becomes Brahmanised and becomes one with Him in place, form, position and experience (Salokya, Sarupya, Samipya and Sayujya). The object of this enquiry is to determine the content of this experience and the exact status of the Mukta. Is it a case of absorption or dispersion or coalescing of contents?

The central idea of Visishtadwaita is the theory of the Absolute as a Personality with the manifold of matter and Jiva

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as His mode. The three thus form an organic unity distinguishable but not divisible. Chit (individual soul), Achit (insentient matter) and Iswara are not finished systems external and hostile to one another. The divine impulse throbs through the finite and imparts substantiality and eternity to it.

Mere Chit by itself becomes the mechanical order of the Charvakas and the modern materialists, which is devoid of self-determination and individuality. Mere Chit alone lands us in pan-psychism and subjectivism. Iswara as an absolute Brahman devoid of differentiation is a mere pantheistic abstraction. Ramanuja avoids these abstractions by his concept of organic unity and thus claims to satisfy the logical needs of spiritual aspirations. Every Purusha (individual soul) pulsates with the life and activity and bliss of Purushottama (Supreme Being) and the knowledge of this truth which is the heart of Visishtadwaita is enshrined in a symposium known as the Arthapanchaka (lit. the five topics) which defines the three categories and their content and character.

The Jiva is, negatively speaking, different from the twenty-four modes of matter and is indivisible, immutable, unmanifest and inconceivable. The distinction between a Devadatta born as a man and a Yajnadatta born as an ox is only a fiction of matter and Karma. *Positively stated*, the atom is the *thinking being* and is self-positing. It is not a mere formal unity, an objective of the Absolute, ultimately absorbed and annulled by It. It is a self-conscious subject illuminating itself as well as the object in which the Aham (I) experience of the Atma is distinguished from the attributive intelligence. While the self is monadic in substantiality, its attributes like the light of a lamp expand in its native or Asamsaric state into infinity. In addition to self-consciousness, the Jiva has the quality of moral *responsibility* and *blissfulness*. Experience is always personal and therefore rational, volitional and emotional. Though encased in the meshes of Karma, it has the capacity to draw and respond to the redemptive freedom of God. In addition to the two classes of souls, Bhaktas and Muktas (devotees and liberated souls) the system mentions a class of ever-free eternals (Nitya-Muktas) enjoying a perfection of Paramapada.

Brahman is the stuff as well as the ground of the cosmos and from His divine nature follows an infinity of absolute auspicious qualities of which the most essential are eternity,

intelligence, infinity, blissfulness and purity. Ever blissful in His transcendental state of Paramapada, He pours His redemptive love into the cosmos with a view to recover it from its career of Karma and sin. He is the true of the true and the eternal of the eternal and His beauteous Form, made of Love itself, manifests itself in five ways, and is a progressive descent into the fold of Samsaric sensuality with a view to realise Himself in the redemption of the others and the joy of communion.

Achit unlike Jiva and Iswara, is unintelligent, mutable and conditioned. Like the Jiva it can be classified into three categories, Prakriti, time and Suddha Satwa. The first is employed by the Lord in the making of the cosmos and the moulding of the souls. The Samsara-ridden self is conditioned by time in its empirical aspect but in its eternal form it exists in Paramapada as a mode of God. When the matter is freed from its mutability it becomes Suddha (pure) Satwa and furnishes material for the glorification of God's Nitya-vibhuti (eternal glory).

Ramanuja's system seems to emphasise the volitional attribute of Reality, and in defining the difference between the Jiva and Iswara, it refers to atomicity as the essence of Jiva, and Infinity or Lordship as the character of Iswara. The relation of Brahman to the manifold of Jivas, which are all spiritually alike, is conceived of on the analogy of an embodied self functioning through intelligence, will and feeling. Thought insists on unity and views Brahman as the immanent source, substance and sum of cosmic variety. The volitional element or Vidheyatwa demands a self-conscious personality as the inner ruler of the Jiva controlled by Sri or Lakshmi for mercy.

The third aspect of feeling brings together the *immanent essence* and the *transcendent eminence* into the organic unity of the Jiva as the Sesha ministering to His satisfaction. The Mumukshu realises his unworthiness and surrenders himself absolutely to the redemptive love of Sriman Narayana.

Bhakti and Prapatti (self-surrender) form a process of building up devotion for the Lord. The principle underlying the scheme is the gradual rescue of the Jiva from the shackles of Samsara (worldly existence) and sensibility caused by unscrutable Karma, and the growth of exclusive love to

God. The empirical will of "Ahamkara" as a mode of matter has to be transfigured into the noumenal "Aham" as a mode of God. This is achieved by the practice of "Karma Yoga" as a service to the Supreme. This practice develops into Jnana Yoga in which the self shines in its native light and attains bliss for ever in Kaivalya (*soul realisation*). This state of Mukti is spurned by Ramanuja as a case of being stranded in mere subjectivity. But true Jnana Yoga is the growth of a full and free devotion or Bhakti to the Lord which culminates in the mood of absolute self-surrender. The Lord likewise loses Himself in the love of the Prapanna. In this way each pines for the other and pours himself into the other till at last they become united together in the irresistibility of communion. Let us analyse the meaning of this communion in terms of intelligence, feeling and will.

The cosmic consciousness of the Mukta (freed soul) follows from the all-pervasive character of his intelligence freed from the limitations of empiricism. In that exalted state there is identity of connotation between the Jiva and Brahman though there is difference in denotation, and the released soul views everything through the eye of God who is his Self. Brahman is really the Self of the Jiva in the same way in which the Jiva is the self in its embodied and empirical functioning. The Aham (I) consciousness therefore connotes Brahman alone and any reference to the Jiva is really made to Brahman who is its stuff, source and Self. The cosmic feelings of Vamadeva who said 'I am Manu and the sun', of Prahlada who said, 'I am all things: all beings are in me who am eternal,' and of Nammalwar who referred to his cosmic authorship, can be consistently explained only in terms of Visishta Aikya (inseparability) and not *Swarupa Aikya* (identity). They are instances of Avibhaga or inseparability and not of complete identity or Aikya.

The consciousness of God-possession or Paramatma Pravesa has its parallels in western mystic experience which tells us that there is a divine thread that holds together the whole congeries of things. There is likewise the equality of enjoyment between the two. In the intuitional insight of Brahman, the soul enjoys *supreme bliss* which cannot be surpassed. The self acquires the eight qualities of Brahman like purity, eternity, blissfulness, etc. The ecstatic experience of Alwar throws a flood of light on the nature and value of the creative joy of this

Brahma Bhava (God-consciousness). The Lord of Love rejects His Heavenly glory, and seized with soul-hunger, He invades the centre of the self and tries to swallow up its whole being. The self is likewise tired of its sensuality and thirsts for His touches, so that it may be immersed in immortal bliss. After a cruel game in which the ecstasy of union alternates with the hazards of separation, in which the gift of self is answered by the grace of God, and the soul is united together with God in eternal and unsurpassable joy. The released Jiva has a sight of God's glory and goodness. All moral limitations are transcended and the unsubstantial fades away. The spirit is annexed to the super-cosmic world where its conations coexist with fruition, and thought is lost in service and enjoyment. The analogy of the river disappearing in the sea and the salt dissolved in water does not refer to the dissolution of personality. The self is freed from the limitations of name and form and the ethical imperfection caused by them, and attains absolute oneness with Brahman as His mode. In the same way, the Adwaitic analogy of sleep does not suggest identity; the Jiva then persists in Brahman as its body without the distinctions of name and form caused by Karma which remains in this state as a possibility or substratum.

Though emotionally and intellectually the Jiva is one with Brahman, the *volitional side shows a dualistic tendency*. As the eternal Sesha of Iswara, the soul depends absolutely on His will and delights in His service and satisfaction. Really speaking God Himself is the means and the end. Our will and being exist, but they have no value of their own. As a corrective to Divine Despotism and slave mentality which follows from this position, the system insists on Divinity more as a redemptive and reciprocal love than as mere Lordship. This ideal of Kainkarya or loving service is entirely different from the idea of co-operating with God and of blind submission to His will. It is a case of at-one-ment by self-effacement.

This gives a graphic account of the way in which the Mumukshu (seeker after salvation) abandons all empirical pleasures both here and in Swarga (heaven) resulting from Punyakarma (good works) as futile and seized with terror at the thought of relentless Karma and Karma-ridden Samsara seeks refuge at the feet of the Guru, surrenders himself exclusively to the Lord and Redeemer Sriman Narayana, and develops an irresistible and organic thirst for Mukti

(emancipation). At the time of Utkramana or journey of the freed soul of the Prapanna, there is a gradual withdrawal of the senses, Manas and Prana into the Jiva and his Antaryamin (the indwelling Lord). The released soul mounts up through the Sushumna to the Brahmarandhra and soars up victoriously to Vaikuntha (the abode of Narayana) in glorious light led by Ativahika and greeted by the whole host of Devas like Vayu and Surya and the Nityasuri known as Amanava. By plunging into the immortal waters of Vraja he is purified and freed from the limits of Prakriti and its Vasanas (desires) and then reaches the transcendental region of Vaikuntha whose unsurpassed glory and bliss is absolutely undefinable. On entering Vaikuntha, the intelligence of the liberated soul till now obscured by Karma, expands into infinity and becomes merged in the bliss of eternal communion or Sayujya. The released soul immediately realises all its spiritual conation with or without a body and without the hazards and hardships of empirical life.

The disembodied state may be created by God as in the case of dreams, but sometimes the soul itself may create a suitable body. The body of Samsara has a name and form framed out by Prakriti and conditioned by the laws of Karma. But the radiant forms of Suddha (pure) Sattwa are a free creation out of immaterial matter residing in eternal time. The soul sees the whole of Reality immediately and obtains everything everywhere. It may enter into several bodies at a time and experience the joys of creation in the light of its transfigured vision. It imitates Brahman and attains equality of enjoyment and intelligence with Him but without His power of cosmic creation and control. Hailed by a host of divine damsels and Brahmanised by them, he enters the Aprakrita city and its streets with millions of gardens and is welcomed by the citizens of that spiritual sphere. He finally reaches the ever resplendent Mandapa where the Lord resides on a throne in the glory of a million suns amidst the chief of the eternal such as Garuda, Adi-sesha and Lakshmi. At last the soul has a sight of the transcendental beautiful form of Sri Narayana with an infinity of auspicious qualities, which baffles description even by Muktas, and is lost in infinite but ever increasing deliciousness and bliss. In the full freedom of this realisation, he devotes himself eternally to the service of his Swami (Lord) and ever enjoys the fraternity of free souls.



This description of Vaikuntha seems to be a Divine replica of our human world with all its sense pleasures and therefore a kind of crass anthropomorphism and theism. Is Vaikuntha a world in time, space and causality like ours? Is there sex or sensuality in the content of this Divine Experience? In the description of Sri Vaikuntha Sri Ramanuja tells us that it is beyond definition and conception even by Brahma and is also beyond the world of causality and Avarana Saphthaka (lit. the seven covering) consisting of the five elements, Ahankara and Mahat. Consequently there is no spiritual or temporal element in Vaikuntha as we understand it. Time and space exist under the form of eternity and Suddha Satwa or Aprakriti (immaterial matter) and are the Divya (spiritual) elements of a Divine region of which we have no conception. The body of an Avatara for instance is composed of this Aprakriti material which can be neither created nor dissolved. The Jiva is defined as a pure spiritual substance organically related to the Lord as its body and is Avibhaga (inseparable) and Aprithaksiddha Viseshana (essential mode) and is Brahmanised for ever in the sense that it is transfigured into His form and immersed in His ineffable bliss like milk and honey, compared to which the bliss of Aiswarya (worldly or other-worldly pleasures), Sukha (enjoyment) and even Kaivalya (self-realisation) is as a ripple in an ocean. Unable to describe this state, the Vedanta resorts to symbols and analogies taken from human experience. It is worthy of note that while the Advaitic experience is illustrated by reference to material things like clay, gold, air, sea, light, etc., the Visishtadwaitin appeals to human experience of ruler, master, father, mother and husband, and both are liable to the fallacy of literal interpretation. The Visishtadwaitist thinks of God chiefly as made of beauty, love and mercy, and naturally clothes his experience in aesthetics, while Advaita and Dwaita are based primarily on thought and will or metaphysics and ethics. Visishtadwaita is constructed on the science of love or aesthetics, and who can say that the one is inferior to the other? Kant thinks that aesthetics can mediate between thought and will. At any rate the value of aesthetics in religious experience cannot be over-estimated. There is a beauty and love "that never was on sea or land" and the transcendental beauty and bliss of the Lord has an irresistible charm for the Mukta-purusha (the liberated soul) who has completely eliminated the values of sense and sensibility. Love and beauty can belong only to personality and

personal relations. The ideas of Sesha and Seshi, and Avibhaga and Aprithaksiddha Viseshana form the heart of Visishtadwaita, and I am inclined to think that the popular conceptions of Narayana and Lakshmi and the experience of sensibility in Vaikuntha are more literary than philosophical. It is impossible to think that the Alwars who so completely disdained the values of the entire cosmos and its pleasures and even the bliss of Kaivalya or self-realisation would rehabilitate Vaikuntha with these rejected values in the name of Aprakrita (immaterial matter). The Sesha concept brings out the fact that God is the only source, sustenance and satisfaction of the Jiva and longs for rapturous communion with him in an infinite variety of ways. The Lord and the Jiva may utilise Aprakrita or spiritual matter for their enjoyment or they may not. Like the Ideas of Plato the former is one indivisible spiritual experience. Judged from this point of view, the Lord is the inner spirit of all as can be seen from the conception of His body being the symbol of Chit (soul) and Achit (matter), Garuda (the celestial bird who carries Narayana) stands for Vedic wisdom and Adisesha (the first of the eternals) represents Jnana and Bala, Lakshmi and the divine damsels stand for the principle of mercy. Even if taken literally, the idea of the Aprakrita (non-material) body and enjoyment has absolutely no analogy to ours. 52838

In this way Ramanuja claims to *mediate* between extreme monism and dualism. The monistic texts only deny the bare manifold and establish Ananyatwa or inseparability as opposed to Aikya or identity and the ultimate similarity of the souls. The Nirguna texts only negate evil and not the being of the Jiva. The dualistic texts do not refer to separateness but only to metaphysical distinctions. The finite is not a fiction of the absolute, nor is it an adjective which by degrees gets self-transcended. Neither is it individuality persisting in its wholeness and afraid of the Absolute. The conceptions of organic unity and redemptive love free the system from the lapses and evils of pantheism on the one hand and anthropomorphism and erotic excesses on the other. Like the Adwaita, it takes away the sense of separateness but retains the being of the Jiva as a distinct thing, and thus resembles Dwaita. Mere philosophy can never solve the problem of Mukti (liberation). Divinity can never be realised by dialectics. No system of thought has said the last word with regard to cosmic origin. The doctrine of Maya is as much open to moral objections as

the theory of Anadi (beginningless) Karma to philosophic and logical objections. Bias is bias, whether it is the anti-intellectualism of a Bhakta or the anti-emotionalism of a Jnanin. According to what a man thinks in this world, so will he be in the next world, and the wealth of spiritual experience cannot be defined by dogmas or labels. Sri Ramakrishna says that Saguna (with attributes) Brahman and Nirguna (without attributes) Brahman are two aspects of the same Truth and not two levels\*, and the manifold ways by which the Lord manifests Himself to suit the several supreme moods of the mystics only reveal the truth of the many-sidedness of spiritual experience. According to Visishtadwaita even the eternals in Vaikuntha realise only one aspect of His beauteous form and one quality of His infinite qualities. Every experience of God refers to God, and is therefore true whether it is self-surrender, or service, or self-gift or self-loss. There is a very thin boundary line between self-loss and self-negation of the Adwaita. Whether Mukti is Salokya, Sarupya, Samipya, or Sayujya or Aikya, there is no doubt that thirst for God in every true Mumukshu is equally genuine and that when he attains Mukti there is no more return to the ills of Samsara.

Visishtadwaita is the perception of the One in the many and makes for social solidarity and religious toleration. It insists not only on the brotherhood of man, but also on the equality of all Jivas, sub-human, human and celestial, and delights in spiritual service. Prapatti or the attitude of self-surrender and self-gift to God who is its source and self is the birthright of every Jiva, human or sub-human, irrespective of caste or colour. That God is love is seen in the fraternity

\*We are sorry we cannot fully agree with the learned writer on this interpretation of Sri Ramakrishna's sayings. Sri Ramakrishna certainly says—"God the Absolute and God the Personal are the same." But it is he again who also declares—"The Adwaita (realisation of the Absolute) is the last word of spiritual experience. It is something to be felt in Samadhi, for it transcends mind and speech." What Sri Ramakrishna really means can be learnt from the teachings of Swami Vivekananda who, of all the disciples, was particularly initiated by the Master into the mysteries of monistic Vedanta. As the Swamiji clearly points out, there are three steps taken by Indian religious thought in regard to God—"It began with the Personal, the extra-cosmic God. It went from the external to the internal cosmic body, God immanent in the universe, and ended in identifying the soul itself with that God, and making one soul, a unit, of all these various manifestations in the universe. This is the last word of the Vedas. It begins with dualism, goes through a qualified monism and ends in perfect monism."—Ed., *V. K.*

of Garuda and Adishesha\* in Vaikuntha. Every deity according to Ramanuja refers to the one Lord Narayana who is immanent in all, and the worship offered to Him goes ultimately to Narayana Himself who is immanent in all beings. Sri Krishna says : " Whosoever worships me in whatsoever form ultimately reaches me." The attainment of Vaikuntha is the privilege of everyone, and there is certainly a place in it for a Jnanin, Bhakta, Karma Yogin or Raja Yogin and all the prophets of the world. Taking my stand on this Hindu truth I extend my hand of fellow-feeling to the followers of Islam and Christianity. Are they prepared to reciprocate this feeling ? Let the history of Islam and Christianity answer it.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### THE HINDU-MOSLEM PROBLEM

It is very unfortunate that the Hindu-Moslem tension is increasing in India. It is more so at the present times when the two communities should unite and work in a spirit of brotherhood for the welfare of their common motherland. Calcutta recently witnessed terrible communal riots. Some temples and mosques were desecrated, damaged and even destroyed. Many persons were killed and wounded. Innocent passers-by were cowardly assassinated. Life and property were in danger in the very heart of the city.

The riots are not without some new aspects. Up till now the Hindus used to be mostly beaten and have their places of worship desecrated. But this time the Mohammedans also suffered greatly at the hands of the Hindus who broke and desecrated some of their mosques by way of retaliation. However, both the communities now realise that none can injure the other without being injured in return. Barbarous acts of mutual revenge have nothing to do with the religious spirit. They are a great disgrace to both the communities and should not be repeated.

One of the most redeeming features of the riots was that many Hindus and Mussalmans protected and rescued individuals and families belonging to the opposite community. At places they joined hands with one another for the protection of both temples and mosques. Another good point was that the municipal conservancy department being disorganised, many Bengali youths and boys very laudably did the work of scavengers in some quarters.

The riots were the outcome of "religious" fanaticism. They were intensified and prolonged by the hooligans of both the communities.

\*The reference here made is to the eagle (Garuda) and serpent (Sesha) being natural enemies.

Taking advantage of the fanatical outbursts these rowdy elements tried to gratify their love for loot and mischief. Those who suffered most were innocent people and the poor deluded souls who were induced to take part in the riots. The chief mischief-makers were the unscrupulous propagandists who set ablaze the fire of communalism and were feeding it by their inflammatory speeches and writings. They should be brought to book, no matter however high their position may be.

The killing of cows by the Mussalmans and the playing of music before mosques by the Hindus are two of the chief causes of "religious" dissensions. The Sangathan and Suddhi (Hindu organisation and conversion) movements also have created in the mind of the Mussalman propagandist an animosity against the Hindu leaders. As the London Times pertinently observed—"Aryan aggressive proselytism in parts of India where Islam has long enjoyed something like a monopoly of conversion at the expense of the Hindus has aroused the particular indignation of the Mohammedan divines." But the days of exclusive monopoly in privileges are fast passing away. Every community must now be prepared to concede to others the advantage which it wants to retain for itself. Anyway, the spirit of communalism which blinds men and makes them inordinately selfish must be banished for ever.

The remedy suggested sometimes for the removal of communal bitterness is that the Hindus and the Mohammedans should think that they are Indians first and Hindus and Mohammedans next. Only a few educated men of the country can do this, but not the vast majority. When even some of the responsible leaders of the two communities find it difficult to think in this way, as they express it from time to time, we should know that the suggestion is not so easy to follow. There is only another solution to the problem.

Let the Hindus and Mohammedans think that they are Hindus and Mohammedans first. But let them know at the same time that the essentials of their religions are one, though the forms and ceremonies may differ. Let them further realise that by following the two different streams of thought—one Aryan and the other Semitic—they are proceeding to the same goal. This will help them to have toleration and regard for each other's religion.

Indian Mussalmans are very much swayed by their extra-territorial patriotism—a thing often unduly emphasised by the fanatic preacher. They should certainly have love and sympathy for their fellow-religionists in other lands. But this should not make them fail to recognise their cultural affinity with their Hindu fellow-countrymen. The Indian Mussalmans should bear in mind that to the vast majority of them India is not only their own motherland, but also the motherland of their forefathers. They are no doubt followers of Mohammed. But that is no reason why they should not claim as their own, along with the teachings and traditions of Islam, also the ancient heritage of India, as the Indian Christian community is beginning to do. This will enable them to establish a vital cultural relation with their Hindu compatriots, which is recognised in some form or other by many cultured Mussalmans to-day. It is sure to strengthen the bond of union between the two communities.

Bigotry and fanaticism stand in the way of our national progress. And these can be removed only by proper education. Fanatical preachers are spreading the contagion of communalism in the name of religion. In their place we want truly religious and liberal-minded teachers who can place before the teeming millions of India the highest truths of their own religion, as also of other faiths. Attempts should also be made in other ways to strengthen the cultural bond. Thus can ignorance—the root cause of the trouble—be removed, and a better understanding between the two great sister communities be made an accomplished fact.

### THE STATE AND THE CITIZEN

The 'Sunday Times' of Bezwada has published a very thoughtful and weighty article from the pen of Srijut Arabinda Ghose on the 'State and the Citizen'. Individuals are immolated at the altar of the state and they have no opportunities whatsoever for their growth—this is the very idea running throughout this writing. Srijut Arabinda observes: "Theoretically it is the subordination of the individual to the good of all that is demanded; practically it is his subordination to a collective egoism, political, military, economic which seeks to satisfy certain collective aims and ambitions shaped and imposed on the great mass of the individuals by a smaller or larger number of ruling persons who are supposed in some way to represent the community. It is immaterial, whether these belong to a governing class or emerge as in modern states from the mass partly by force of character, but much more by force of circumstances, are imposed more by the hypnotism of verbal persuasion than by overt and actual force. In either case there is no guarantee that this ruling body represents the best mind of the nation or its noblest aims or its highest instincts."

The state whatever its form may be, monarchical or republican, should stand for the good and prosperity of the people in general. But the most important factors in the state are the individuals whose well-being is unfortunately kept in the back-ground. People are bound so much by the rigid fetters of Governments and their time is so much occupied that they cannot move freely nor have original and independent thinking. Individual development has become practically an impossibility to-day. But this should not be. The state should provide every possible facility for the individual's growth. "The business of the state, so long as it continues to be a necessary element in human life and growth," says Srijut Arabinda, "is to provide all possible facilities for co-operative action to remove obstacles, to prevent all really harmful waste and friction.....and removing avoidable injustice, to secure for every individual a just and equal chance of self-development and satisfaction to the extent of his powers and in the line of his nature."

### CHARACTER EDUCATION

True education, the aim of which should be 'the manifestation of practical aptitude and sterling character,' is a crying necessity in our

country at the present times. There are many educational institutions situated throughout the length and breadth of the country, but the method of teaching is so defective that few students acquire the sterling qualities of character when they come out of these cloisters of learning. One of the main causes of this defect is the want of proper training of our young students in their school life.

Dr. Sudhindra Bose has contributed an interesting article on "Character-Education" in the *Modern Review* for May, 1926. In it he speaks of the "Science of character" as expounded by Dr. Edwin D. Starbuck—one of the most important leaders in the field of character-education in America. Dr. Bose observes, "The best way to cultivate character is not by direct moral instruction, but indirect. Discourses on abstract ideals by ethical experts do little good to the pupils. 'We must stop rubbing the virtues into the mental skins of our children. We must reduce to a modicum all the direct moral appeals that are apt to end in sentimentality or insincerity. We must minimise the introspection and vivisection that threaten to lead to paralysis, artificiality and introversion.' " Really the direct method of imparting education, especially in character-building, seldom bears any effect on the tender minds of the youngsters, who do not possess the capacity of catching abstract ideas and translating them into action. The indirect method, which Dr. Starbuck calls the natural method, is better and far more effective. "This method," says Dr. Bose, "would have the pupils discover for them most of the virtues—good-will, self-control, sympathy, helpfulness—through conduct."

As regards the religious training of our students, Dr. Bose remarks: "Should religion be included in ethical teaching? That depends upon the meaning of the word religion. To Dr. Starbuck religion consists in the wholehearted response to ideal virtues, such as beauty, truth, reverence for the divine order of the world. He sympathises with the aims of those who would include religions founded upon broad principles, in a program of moral training. Liberal in religious and social questions, he holds, however, that true religion has nothing to do with fabulous yarns, creeds, dogmas, and all other cargo of beliefs invented by theology." The teaching of religion to young students in the sectarian and narrow sense of the term should be totally eschewed. The teachers should impart to them only the simple principles of religion based on broad views by narrating to them the lives of great men and short stories conveying lofty ideas of truth and morality. And lastly they should practise before the students what they teach, so that the pupils may easily follow the teachings in their daily life and prove to be good and noble citizens of the country in future.

#### LABOUR AND IDEAL STATE

"British experience of the strike leaves no possibility of doubt that somewhere in her industrial relations there is a fallacy." —This is what Mr. Henry Ford is reported to have written in his paper, "*Dearborn Independent*," commenting on the recent labour strike in Britain. The "fallacy" is prevalent more or less throughout the industrial world. The relation between capital and labour is nowhere founded on an

equitable economic basis. And that is why there exists a great conflict between the manufacturing and the working classes all over the world. The widespread discontent among the wage-earning communities coming to be more and more conscious of their growing power is expressing itself in industrial deadlocks and strikes which have become world-phenomena to-day. Our present age of industrialism is tending to divide society practically into the two fighting camps of capital and labour.

All human communities were and still are to a great extent composed of the priest, the soldier, the merchant and the labourer. The division may be based on occupation or heredity or both. Whatever it is, society is in turn governed by one of these four classes. The absolute rule of the priestly and the military powers is practically over, probably never to return. Ours is now the age of commercialism, mostly dominated by capitalistic classes. And labour is trying its level best to wrest power from them. This is in fact the upshot of the great economic and social revolution which our modern world is witnessing everywhere.

A new social order is coming to be established. Like the previous systems, it also proposes to bring millennium to man! But as in the past, so also in the present and the future, the ideal state will ever remain a dream, unrealised and unrealisable, so long as there continues the domination by a particular class, whichever it may be. At the present times the down-trodden wage-earner is hankering for salvation. He is gradually attaining to his freedom and power—as the dawn of democracy clearly indicates. But it will be a great pity if the slave in his turn becomes a tyrant and proposes to carry everything before him by the sheer strength of his number.

Various forms of government have been tried in the past. Imperialism, constitutional monarchy, democracy, socialism, communism and many other systems are being tried now. Each of these has its merits and demerits, its blessings and curses. The ideal state will be that in which the conflict of interests and privileges can be removed and a perfect harmony established between the warring communities now struggling for "dictatorship." But its complete realisation is very doubtful, if not impossible. It was therefore that Swami Vivekananda asked—"If it is possible to form a state in which the knowledge of the priest period, the culture of the military, the distributive spirit of the commercial, and the ideal of equality of the last (labour rule) can all be kept intact, minus their evils, it will be an ideal state. But is it possible?" Whether it is possible or not, sincere attempts should be made for its realisation. And the more the world succeeds in the attempt, the nearer will it be to the ideal state and with it nearer to peace and prosperity which mankind is eagerly hankering for to-day.

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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**SUB-CONSCIOUS MIND AND ITS CONTROL**, by Swami Prabhavananda. Published by the Vedanta Society of Portland, 616, Kraemer Building, Second and Washington Streets, Portland, Oregon, U. S. A.

This pamphlet characterised by clarity of thought and style is a lecture by Swami Prabhavananda who is now in charge of the Vedanta Society in Portland, and forms an addition to the Ramakrishna Mission literature published in America. As the Swami clearly points out—"The father of the sub-conscious is the conscious. We first act and think thoughts consciously ; these become sub-conscious, then the sub-conscious in turn controls the conscious." The realisation of the Soul is possible only when the sub-conscious is entirely controlled. "The most effective way to do this," says the Swami, "is to meditate, meditate—meditate on the Divine Spirit within us . . . What higher impression can you hold than the impression of Divine Thought? It is going to the source of all. As you practise this meditation, the whole man is dragged out, as it were, and you will realise for yourself, as you practise, how the old Samskaras are trying and struggling to give you the last bite. You will witness a fighting between the impressions—good and evil, which you have put into your pocket and forgotten about. They will all rise in your conscious mind, then your enemy cannot fight you in the dark, but must come out in the open field, and you can give the death-blow. This fight, this struggle, of course, everyone has to undergo in life. A study of the lives of all great teachers, prophets and spiritual aspirants, will show that they all passed through this fight. Ultimately the Soul's victory is achieved."

**POEMS MORAL AND RELIGIOUS**, by V. Vembu Sastri, B. A., L. T., Madras Educational Dept, with a foreword by K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B. A., B. L. Published by K. Ramachandran, 15, Agraharam, Nungambakam, Madras.

A maiden attempt in verse writing by the author. Some of the subjects treated are Search after God, Christ on the Cross, The Indian Sadhu, and the Grace of God.

**THE SCHOLAR** : An illustrated monthly devoted to literature, science and art. Edited by V. K. Subrahmanya Aiyar, B. A. and E. H. Parameswaran, M. A., L. T., and published from Palghat. Subscription: Inland Rs. 3, Foreign Sh. 6.

This Journal deals with a variety of literary, scientific, religious, philosophical and general subjects. Short stories, cross-word competitions and such literary topics as would be useful to students are some of the features of the magazine, which are sure to render it popular in schools and colleges and amongst general readers. We wish all success to our new contemporary.

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## NEWS AND REPORTS

### SWAMI SHIVANANDA IN SOUTH INDIA

Srimat Swami Shivananda, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, accompanied by Swamis Sharvananda and Yatiswarananda and party, started from the Headquarters at Belur on the 2nd May and reached Madras on the 11th. The Swamis broke their journey at Bhubaneswar on the way, and also visited Puri. They halted for two days at Waltair where Swami Sharvananda delivered a public lecture.

After a stay of about a month in Madras, Swamis Shivananda and Sharvananda left for Ootacamund on Thursday, the 3rd June.

### SWAMI PARAMANANDA'S DEPARTURE FOR AMERICA

Swami Paramananda, President and founder of the Vedanta centre at Boston and the Ananda Ashrama at La Crescenta in California, who came to India in February last, sailed for America from Calcutta on Sunday, the 2nd May by S. S. Takada. He has taken with him Swamis Dayananda and Akhilananda to assist in the Mission work in San Francisco and La Crescenta respectively. The last letter we received from the Swamis was from Penang and was dated May 9th. They expect to reach San Francisco about the second week of June. We wish them all success.

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENTS' HOME, MADRAS.

Swami Saswatananda who left Madras for Belur on the 20th March to attend the recent Ramakrishna Math and Mission Convention as a representative of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home at Mylapore came back to Madras on the 1st June. He has resumed his work as warden of the Home.

Swami Devatmananda who came along with Swami Saswatananda, will also do educational work in the Students' Home. The Swami was one of the fourteen monastic workers of the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith at Deoghar in the Santal Parganas, Behar, and was living there for four years.

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION RELIEF-WORK AT

#### MADARIPUR AND PURNEA

In the tornado-affected area of Madaripur in Faridpur District, the Mission erected 174 huts for the poor sufferers and spent Rs. 1,317-14-6 for the purpose. The Mission tenders its thanks to Srijut Surendra Nath Biswas for his hearty co-operation.

Cholera-relief work was done by the Mission in Purnea Dt. The total number of patients treated was 171, of whom 26 unfortunately died. Wells were disinfected, preventive medicines were distributed and instructions regarding precautionary measures were given to the people. The work is still going on.

#### OUR AMERICAN CENTRES

"A Western Disciple" has kindly sent us the following short note regarding our Vedanta centres in the United States of America. We trust it will remove some misconceptions, if any, in the minds of our readers, and acquaint them with the true facts :—

At present we have in America the following centres :

1. Vedanta Society of New York.
2. Vedanta Society of San Francisco, or The Hindu Temple.
3. Shanti Ashrama in California.
4. Vedanta Centre of Boston.
5. Ananda Ashrama in La Crescenta.
6. Vedanta Society of Portland, Oregon.

Swami Vivekananda started a class or centre in New York and then handed it over to Swami Abhedananda who was in charge of the centre for many years. Then Swami Abhedananda left New York, leaving Swami Bodhananda in charge of the New York Centre, and opened a Vedanta Ashrama in West Cornwall, which unfortunately is now defunct. Swami Bodhananda procured a permanent home for the Vedanta Society of New York in recent years and thus has established the Centre on a firm footing.

During Swami Vivekananda's last visit to San Francisco, a Vedanta class was formed. After he left, he sent Swami Turiyananda who took charge of it and established the Shanti Ashrama in California.

After Swami Turiyananda sailed for India, Swami Trigunatita came to San Francisco and established the Hindu Temple (the first one in the West, as the Swami used to call it), known also as the Vedanta Society of San Francisco.

Swami Prakashananda came to San Francisco to assist in the work of Swami Trigunatita. After the passing away of the latter, Swami Prakashananda took charge of the Hindu Temple, or the Vedanta Society of San Francisco, and gave a firmer footing to the work there.

Before Swami Abhedananda left for India, he came away from West Cornwall and opened another Vedanta Ashrama in San Francisco, independent of the Vedanta Society of San Francisco. This, however, died out with his leaving for India.

Swami Paramananda founded and established the Vedanta Centre of Boston and the Ananda Ashrama in La Crescenta, California.

A new Vedanta Society has been opened in Portland, Oregon, by Swami Prabhavananda, who came as an assistant to Swami Prakashananda.

∴ This is all the history of the opening and establishment of the different Vedanta Centres in America.

# THE VEDANTA KESARI

" Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

" Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want

And the first step in getting strength is to uphold

The Upanishad and believe that ' I am the Atman.' "

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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## P R A Y E R

भयानां भयं भीषणं भीषणानां गतिः प्राणिनां पावनं पावनानाम् ।

महोच्चैः पदानां नियन्तृ त्वमेकं परेषां परं रक्षणं रक्षणानाम् ॥

परेषां प्रभो सर्वरूपाविनाशिन् अनिर्देश्य सर्वेन्द्रियागम्य सत्य ।

अचिन्त्याक्षर व्यापकाव्यक्ततत्त्व जगद्भासकाधीश पायादपायात् ॥

तदेकं स्मरामो तदेकं भजामो तदेकं जगत्साक्षिरूपं नमामः ।

सदेकं निधानं निरालम्बमीशं भवाम्भोधिपोतं शरण्यं ब्रजामः ॥

O Lord ! Thou art the Dread of the dreadful, Terror of the terrible, Refuge of all beings, Purificator of all purificators. Thou alone art the ruler of even the high-placed ones. Thou art Supreme over the supreme, Protector of the protectors.

O Supreme Lord ! Thou art the Imperishable Being, yet appearest as all things. Thou art imperceptible by the senses, yet art the very Truth. Thou art incomprehensible and immutable. Thou art the all-pervading hidden Essence. Lord and Light of the Universe ! Save us from harm.

On that One alone we meditate, to that One alone we offer our worship. To that One alone—the Witness of the universe—we tender our salutations. Unto the One who is our sole Support—the Self-existent Lord, the Vessel of safety in the ocean of existence—we seek refuge.

—MAHANIRVANA TANTRA

## SPIRITUAL TALKS WITH SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

[The Swami—who was looked upon by Sri Ramakrishna as his “spiritual son” and was the late President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission—visited Benares in January, 1921. Notes of some of his inspiring conversations held there were taken down by a monastic member in Bengali. They are presented here in translation to our readers.]

THE SWAMI—Is it all right with your religious practices ?

S—No Maharaj. With all my efforts, I see there is no spiritual unfoldment. Hence I find no peace of mind. Evidently we are born with evil Samskaras (impressions). And these stand in the way of our spiritual progress.

THE SWAMI—My boy, you shouldn't think so. Practise Japam at the dead of night. If you cannot do it at that time, do it during the early hours of the morning. Perform Purascharana\*. Don't be wasting your valuable time any more. Lose yourself in prayer and meditation. All inner truths will come out by themselves, if you practise Sadhana for some time.

The spiritual aspirant should not take much food at night. At first take three-fourths of your usual diet. Then reduce the quantity still further to half. In the beginning you may feel some weakness of the body. But the body will be all right after some time, and will remain active and in perfect order.

The Swami next referred to the days of Sadhana he practised in the company of his brother-disciples, and

\*Usually it implies regular Japam or the repetition of the name of the Deity a prescribed number of times, followed by Homa and other ceremonies. An additional number of Japam is also permissible in place of these ceremonies.

said, "We used to take only a single meal during the whole day and night."

**THE SWAMI**—A Sadhaka should first learn about the spiritual path from some great soul, and then follow it methodically. If he does it haphazardly he cannot achieve much success. Again if he gives it up once, he will have to put forth double the usual efforts in order to gain the desired result. But no endeavour is lost. Lust, anger, etc., slowly go away from him who leads the spiritual life.

Your mind is now covered over by Rajas (activity) and Tamas (inertia). It must be made pure and subtle, and raised to the state of Sattwa (equilibrium). Then you will find pleasure in religious practices and will also feel inclined to devote more and more time to them. Later on, when the mind will attain to perfect purity, you will naturally keep yourself engaged in spiritual culture all your time. The mind is at present on the gross plane. Consequently it leans towards gross things. But when it becomes awakened, it naturally inclines towards the spiritual. When it becomes subtle its capacity also increases. With its help the aspirant is able to understand the truths about God within a short time.

When you sit for meditation, first think of a blissful Divine form. This will have a soothing effect on your nerves and mind. Otherwise, meditation will become dry and tedious. Think of the form of your Ishtam as smiling and full of bliss.

Do not while away your time any more. Now the senses are strong and must be kept under control. This is no doubt a troublesome task. But practise Sadhana continuously for seven or eight years. You will realise the fruits of the practices yourself, and the peace and bliss thereof. Lady devotees have attained to spiritual illu-

mination. Should you not also strive for it? But women have greater faith than men. That is why they succeed in a comparatively short time. Believe me, the Lord is always with you. If you practise a little, He will extend His helping hand to you. It is He who is protecting us all from miseries and troubles. How unbounded is His grace ! How can I describe it to you ?

You have been hearing of all these spiritual things. Now realise them. You have done enough of study and reasoning. Now do some spiritual practice. First take up that aspect of God which appeals to you most. And follow your own path of Sadhana. When you realise God through it, you will feel the joy of realising Him also in other aspects and through other paths.

One should meditate on the form of the Ishtam along with Japam. Otherwise Japam does not become effective. If you cannot think of the whole form, think of only a part of it. Begin your meditation by thinking of the "lotus feet" of the Deity. You must try to do it even if you fail in the beginning. Why should you stop until you succeed ? Succeed you must. Practice will make everything easy.

Is meditation an easy affair ? Remember, it is next only to Samadhi.

Self-surrender and everything else will come from within through Sadhana. Try to leave everything unto the Lord. Resign yourself wholly unto Him.

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## EDITORIAL NOTES

### THE HINDU-MOSLEM PROBLEM

“**T**HERE exists a mountain-high barrier between the Hindu and the Mohammedan communities. They have lived together for the last so many centuries. But still the way of thinking and the doctrines and practices of the one have remained quite unintelligible to the other.” Sri Ramakrishna made a bare statement of fact when he said this nearly four decades ago. Communal quarrels and dissensions, which are disturbing the peace of the land in modern times, were practically unknown in those days. The members of the two communities lived together in apparent peace and amity, as the vast majority still do in most towns and villages. They even visited each other's shrines and took part in each other's festivals and celebrations. The signs of a cultural synthesis were manifest more in the days of Sri Ramakrishna than they are at present. But this harmony was not based on secure foundations. There was practically no union of hearts beating to the same spiritual tune. Sri Ramakrishna, with the unerring vision of a prophet that he was, clearly detected the wide differences in views and temperaments between the followers of the two rival faiths. And not only this. He also showed in his own life how the obstacles can be removed and inter-communal union established on the bed-rock of cultural unity.

### SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S LOVE FOR ISLAM

It was at the feet of his great Master that Swami Vivekananda learnt to understand and love Islam. “I love our Mohammedans,” he said once to his disciple, Sister Nivedita. On being asked as to how he imbibed this feeling, the Swami gave the direct reply that it must have been due to the training he received under his Guru—Sri Ramakrishna—who had a unique method of his own. He wanted to attain to God-realisation through Islam. He took formal initiation from a Mussalman Fakir, dressed like a Mohammedan, repeated the holy name of Allah, said his prayers regularly, realised God by following the Islamic path of devotion, and proclaimed the truth that the same Eternal Being “is invoked by some as God, by some as Allah, by some as Hari and by



others as Brahman." But Swami Vivekananda loved the Mohammedans not only because his Master "became Christian and Mohammedan and Vaishnava by turns" but also because they were the dear children of his Motherland. The Mussalman invaders did not come to India in a body as freebooters to carry off her priceless treasures for enriching foreign lands. They came to make India their permanent home. Some of them were no doubt religious fanatics and tried to spread their faith by fire and sword, by persecutions and forcible conversions. But the majority of the new-comers, while they tenaciously retained their faith, also adapted themselves to the old Indian civilisation and accepted the administrative system of the land. They undoubtedly introduced an alien civilisation in India, but they enriched at the same time India's culture as a whole, and her art and architecture, music and literature in particular. They became children of the soil in every sense of the term. Very truly did Swami Vivekananda once remark to a disciple—"Shah Jehan would have turned in his grave to hear himself called a 'foreigner'."

#### VEDANTA BRAIN AND ISLAM BODY

Swami Vivekananda—the patriot-saint—always dreamt of a united, rejuvenated India. "For our own Motherland," he wrote to a Mohammedan admirer, "a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam—Vedanta brain and Islam body—is the only hope. I see in my mind's eye the future perfect India rising out of this chaos and strife, glorious and invincible, with Vedanta brain and Islam body." The unity which the Swami speaks of is to be based not on the material concerns of life but on the spiritual synthesis of Hinduism and Islam, of which his Master was a veritable embodiment. In the exchange and assimilation of mutual ideals and in the recognition of the common spiritual interests alone he saw the possibility of a Hindu-Moslem unity which is undoubtedly an essential factor in Indian national regeneration. "Nationalism in India," declared the Swami, "must be a gathering up of its scattered spiritual forces." There cannot possibly be any other basis for a union of hearts in the case of the Indian people who, be they Hindu or Mohammedan, Christian or Zoroastrian, still look upon religion as the keynote of the music of their life, individual and collective. It is absolutely necessary for us to bear in mind that in all movements for unification greater stress should be laid on inner than on extraneous bonds, on positive and abiding than on negative and

changing points of contact. Love for common material interests and hatred for the common enemy standing in the way of their realisation may be all right as a cheap expediency in bringing about a temporary solidarity. But the motives themselves contain the seed of disruption, which may germinate any moment self-interest is hurt. Union to be permanent must under all circumstances be allied to the permanent values of life. It can be securely based only on the synthesis of religious culture which both the Hindu and Mohammedan communities hold nearest to their heart.

#### SYNTHESIS OF VEDANTA AND ISLAM

Swami Vivekananda was the apostle of the religion universal as realised and preached by his Master. As such he was a great admirer of the democratic spirit and vitalising powers of Islam. He rejoiced to see how the religion of the Prophet of Arabia approached the ideals of equality in the plane of workaday life and how it exalted the social rights of the low-born more than any other faith. He marvelled to see again how it succeeded, as Sister Nivedita puts it, "in conserving and developing, in too gentle a race, the ideals of organised struggle and resistance". But Islam, as he also noticed, usually lacks the higher idealism and catholicity and toleration of the Vedanta, and tries to limit human brotherhood within the four walls of its creed. The Swami was also fully conscious of the defects and merits of Hinduism. "No religion on earth", he remarked, "preaches the dignity of humanity in such a lofty strain as Hinduism, and no religion on earth treads upon the necks of the poor and the low in such a fashion as Hinduism." But the defect, as the Swami also pointed out, lay not in the grand ideals but in the want of their practical application. Our present-day Hinduism is very rigid in social matters, but in higher religious life it allows a freedom that cannot be even dreamt of by any other religion. It allows to some extent invidious distinctions among the members of its own fold but it is much more tolerant,—tolerant to a fault as some people say—towards aliens than any other faith. The strength of Islam lies in its practicality. The greatness of the Vedanta—the essence of Hinduism—lies in its spiritual idealism, in its Advaitism which again in the words of Swami Vivekananda "is the last word of religion and thought and the only position from which one can look upon all religions and sects with love." The dream of the Swami was to combine the universal ideals as held by the

Vedanta with the democratic practices as realised by Islam. The Vedanta must be more practical. Islam should be more universal. This is what he means when he says—"Without the help of practical Islam, theories of Vedantism, however fine and wonderful they may be, are entirely valueless to the vast mass of mankind. We want to lead mankind to the place where there is neither the Vedas, nor the Bible, nor the Koran; yet this has to be done by harmonising the Vedas, the Bible and the Koran. Mankind ought to be taught that religions are but the varied expressions of the *religion* which is Oneness, so that each may choose the path that suits him best."

#### CULTURAL UNITY—THE SOLUTION

The real solution of our Hindu-Moslem problem lies in cultural unity. But this does not imply the fostering of a form of hybridism in religious life, or of a mere fanciful eclecticism which is likely to destroy the very soul as also the distinctive features of the two religions. It means on the other hand a proper understanding and appreciation of both the Aryan and Semitic cultures, and a harmonious blending of idealism and practicality, of extensity and intensity in both of them. Thus alone can be removed the "mountain-high barrier" which separates the Hindus from the Mussalmans. At present we are living in days when bigoted theologians are trying to prove the superiority of their own, to other peoples' faiths, traditions and customs. Narrow-minded political self-seekers are claiming for their respective communities special privileges which they want to deny to others. Fanatical preachers and scribes are poisoning the minds of the people by their inflammatory and rancorous speeches and writings. We certainly stand now in greater need than ever before of all beneficent agencies that can dispel the clouds of ignorance and suspicion rising in the minds of both the Hindus and Mussalmans, and can bring about a better understanding and more cordial relation between them. It is, however, a happy sign of the times that at least some thoughtful members of both the communities are realising this necessity. "Living close together, as they are, for centuries in India," observes a cultured Moslem writer—Mr. Wahed Hasain—in a recent number of the *Modern Review*, "it is rather strange that Hindus and Moslems should possess such an imperfect knowledge of what is contained in their respective scriptures. . . . The result of such ignorance is that each community fails to make a proper estimate of the grand universal

truth which the highest thinkers and the best minds of every nation have been striving to attain . . . . Beneath the surface of outward ceremonies and practices, lie embedded the gems of truth which, when discovered, shed eternal lustre and dispel doubt and darkness from the mind. But such gems must be found out and laid bare to the eyes before people can be asked to appreciate their real value."

#### GOD OF THE UPANISHAD AND KORAN

The sages of Upanishadic India realised the same Infinite, Incomprehensible, Supreme Being that was revealed to Mohammed and other Semitic seers of Truth. This the above-mentioned writer of "Cultural Unity—Ethical Teaching of the Quran and the Upanishads" clearly shows by means of apt quotations. The Upanishads declare—"God is indeed one and has no second. He is immortal and without form or figure, omnipresent, pervading external and internal objects, unborn, without breath or individual mind. The supreme Being, free from all stain, devoid of figure or form and entirely pure, the light of all lights, resides in the heart, his resplendently excellent seat. He is great and all-sustaining for on him rests all existence such as those that move, those that breathe, those that twinkle and those that do not. God being eternal existence, the universe and whatsoever exists, exists and proceeds from Him." The Koran too proclaims the same truth in much the same manner : "There is no deity except one Being—Allah. He is of pure essence, free from all impurities, free from all defects, self-sufficient, self-subsisting, self-effulgent, light of all lights, possessing splendour and glory, self-dependent and ever existing, an ever-living God, omniscient, omnipresent, imperishable even when all comes to nought. He is beyond all attributive description. He pervades the universe and His knowledge extends over all. He created at the beginning and He watches everything and keeps everything within knowledge." Men of realisation speak of very much the same experiences. Whether theologians interpret them from the standpoint of monotheism or monism is another matter.

#### KABIR'S AND NANAK'S MESSAGE OF HARMONY

The impact of Islam and Hinduism brought into existence a great religious movement which effected a grand spiritual synthesis of Hinduism and Islam. The great leaders of this

movement, particularly Kabir and Nanak, preached by their life and thought the fundamental unity of the two faiths. Kabir sang—

“O God, whether Allah or Ram, I live by Thy name,  
O Lord, show kindness unto me.

Hari dwelleth in the south, Allah hath His place in  
the west.

Search in Thy heart, search in the heart of hearts;  
there is His peace and abode.”

Guru Nanak, too, proclaimed the same ideals of harmony and toleration—“He alone is a true Hindu whose heart is just, and he only is a good Mohammedan whose life is pure. Be true and thou shalt be free . . . God will not ask man of what race he is. He will ask what he has done.” Again he says—“Love the saints of every faith. Put away your pride. Remember, the essence of religion is meekness and sympathy.” So far as the essentials are concerned, there is very little difference between religion and religion. Are not the five principles of Islam,—belief in God, in Divine revelation and in the life to come, prayer to God and charity,—the principles of Hinduism also? Are not the noble virtues—fearlessness, purity of heart, charity, uprightness and compassion to beings and non-covetousness—spoken of in the Bhagavat Gita as divine attributes, praised and prized by the pious Mussalmans also? Really, as Guru Nanak has said—“To him the delusion of whose heart is gone, Hindus and Mussalmans are the same.” Thus the real solution of our communal question lies in cultural unity, a fact strongly emphasised by our prophets and saints, ancient and modern.

#### DAWN OF CULTURAL UNITY

A new era of cultural unity is dawning upon the world. Everywhere there is being raised a protest against the perversion of religious truths by the narrow-minded Mulla and the bigoted Hindu priest. “The Mullas have done,” observes a writer in the *Islamic World*, “tremendous harm to the cause of Islam. They have invariably created difficulties in the path of reform. They have disfigured the beautiful teachings of the Holy Prophet, and made them disgusting. They have twisted the simple tenets of Islam to serve their selfish ends.” What is true of the fanatical Mulla is also true of the ignorant Hindu priest. Anyway, there is now an almost

universal demand for the liberal interpretation of religion. And theologians and missionaries are being forced to meet this demand, if not for the sake of truth, at least for the sake of the temporal considerations of life. The sledge-hammer blows of materialism are pulverising the encrustations of dead forms and ceremonies which threaten to kill the spirit of religion. People are no doubt losing to some extent the intense faith, sometimes verging on fanaticism, which their forefathers used to possess. What will be the result of this loss of faith?—Many ask this question. At least in the case of the majority of people, the words of Tolstoy will prove true —“The result will be . . . . . that the religious wisdom of the whole world will become accessible and intelligible to them. People will grow up and develop with unperverted understanding and feelings. Having discarded a teaching accepted credulously, people will order their relations towards God reasonably in conformity with their knowledge ; and will recognise the moral obligations that flow from that relation.” May we be able to save ourselves from the hands of the theologians who delight in distorting the truth ! And may we try to learn the highest ideals of the synthetic religion from the lives of our mystics—our Kabirs, Nanaks and Sri Ramakrishnas—our saints and sages—our living scriptures ! If we can do that, not only Hindu-Moslem unity, but the unity of the followers of all religions will be an accomplished fact in no time. May we all strive for that !

## ÆSTHETICS AND RELIGION

BY SWAMI GHANANANDA

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**W**ELL has it been said by a poet that ‘a thing of beauty is a joy for ever’. Man possesses a keen sense of the beautiful and instinctively appreciates it. We glory in the beauty of the sun and moon and stars, the hills and woods and streams, the foliage and flowers and fruits. We delight in the dulcet sounds of music, the graceful rhythm of songs, and the mute eloquence of painting and architecture. We see beauty in life and nature around us. It casts a spell over ‘even the tenderest babe in arms’. It has a charm for all mankind.

Though we all feel satisfaction in the contemplation of beauty, we feel it is a stroke of temerity to define it. It has

been recorded of St. Augustine that he remarked 'of time, "What is it? If unasked, I know; if you ask me, I know not." In a similar way, if unasked, we all know what beauty is; but when we are asked to express its nature, we find that words fail us. It is beyond all analysis. We cannot say it has a material origin. It cannot result from a mere mechanical manipulation of atoms and molecules. That it is something divine we imply, when we speak of the beauty of virtue or of a noble life or of God. But when we try to conceive of it or contemplate it, we realise that we lose ourselves in its thought. It brings about a little of that self-forgetfulness which great seers and mystics used to experience when they felt inspired by divine thoughts occasioned by the sight of something beautiful like the blue sky or the passing cloud.

When the great philosopher Kant called the feeling for the beautiful 'a disinterested delight,' he expressed a psychological fact the accuracy of which we can test by self-observation. When the idea of beauty passes through our mind, we are raised from the world of petty interests or selfish ideas to a higher plane where the mind leaves its old moorings and feels an unearthly joy. It is in this power of beauty to ennoble and purify the human mind that its divine nature lies. The feeling for beauty should on no account be identified with what is pleasurable, because pleasure results from a gratification of the senses or a titillation of the nerves, whereas beauty is of the soul.

## II

It is interesting to study the conditions of the mind when it feels and contemplates the beautiful. Such a study will reveal how æsthetic contemplation can help us in going beyond this world to the threshold of the other which is above time, space and causation. It is but natural that an explanation for this can be sought for only in psychology and metaphysics.

The functionings of the mind can be classed into two kinds: one is its outward workings and the other its inward activities. These have been designated in Sanskrit as *Pravritti* and *Nivritti*. In the man in the street, who has not tasted to any high degree the 'sweetness of light and culture' and whose enjoyment consists almost entirely in the senses, the mind is functioning in the path of *Pravritti*. Says the *Katha Upanishad*:

पराञ्चि खानि व्यतृणत्स्वयम्भूस्तस्मात्पराङ् पश्यति नान्तरात्मन् ।

“The self-existent (God) has rendered the senses (so) defective that they go outward and hence man sees the external and not the internal self”.

Such a mind is turned towards the world of external phenomena. But in the cultured and educated man of refined tastes and higher ideal, who is a seeker after Truth, the mind is working in the Nivritti path. As the Sankhya Karika has

प्रकृतिं पश्यति पुरुषः प्रेक्षकवत् अवस्थितः सुस्थः ॥

“The Purusha (Soul) beholds Prakriti (nature), spectator-like, standing aloof, well-standing.” Higher æsthetics which inspires us with religious feelings and sentiments helps us in withdrawing the mind from the path of Pravritti and making it tread the path of Nivritti.

There are two standpoints from which to investigate the world by abstract thought, and these are the empirical and the transcendental. When we confine ourselves to the empirical standpoint, we regard things in the form in which they appear to us, that is, as they are reflected in our consciousness. From the transcendental standpoint we try to discover the inner reality or the essence of things. In the empirical view, the subject and object are always connected by nearer or remoter relations of time, space and causation. It is in the consciousness of these relations that our ‘interest’ in the objects consists. Æsthetic perception is possible when the consciousness of these relations and along with it also the possibility of an interested pleasure is transcended, with an extraordinarily intense activity of the mind. When this happens, both subject and object ‘face each other, lifted as it were, above time, space and causality,’ that is above the condition of finite earthly existence. Remarking on the nature of this experience, Dr. Paul Deussen writes—  
“Here and here alone lies the point of contact between æsthetics and morality. The aim of morality is the negation of individuality, that of æsthetic intuition the temporal forgetting of it. The positive delight of æsthetic contemplation is to us a warrant, that beyond individuality there is not a painless Nothing, but a state the exuberant bliss of which cannot be compared to any earthly feeling of delight.” The Sunya-vada (Nihilism) of Buddhism does not realise that the divine bliss of Samadhi (God-communion) is a positive



state. What is negated is only the individuality of the mediator. The Vedanta follows the method of negation (Neti, Neti) as one of the methods of meditation, but the negation is not the negation of the Self but the negation of matter.

The æsthetic phenomenon is a subjective process. The transitory elevation of the mind above individual existence is attained by the contemplating subject being withdrawn by processes in himself from the consciousness of individuality. But this may also be brought about by the contemplated object making us forget all that is finite in its imperfection and limitation. To exercise such an elevating and purifying influence on the mind, the object must be beautiful. And the feeling for beauty is evoked through a strange concurrence of subjective and objective conditions—by a mutual influence of subject and object—which can be explained only on the basis of an original kinship between them. This is in accord with what the Vedanta holds, viz., that the subject and object are both transcended by the Atman or Spirit. Plato describes the very same thing in a mythological way in his *Phædrus* when he says that it is a contemplation of the Ideas taking place beyond the phenomenal world before birth by which what is spaceless and timeless is expressed in terms of space and time.

### III

Thus, in æsthetics, the power of beauty to make man forget his little self enables him to concentrate his mind wholly on the object of æsthetic contemplation within himself. This process subdues all the waves of his mind except the one which is the thought of the object. When such contemplation is continued for a sufficiently long time to make all the foreign waves of thought quiet down and to give greater and greater concentration on the object, the contemplator feels a great joy and calmness of mind. Many poets and artists have had this mood in several moments of their life, but a close study of their writings would show that it is not "the peace which passeth all understanding" of the Bible or the Samadhi of the Indian Yogis. Trances and poetic moods may come and go but they cannot reveal to man that Truth Eternal realising which he becomes illumined. They are but temporary elevations of the mind and cannot destroy the Samskaras (impressions) and Vasanas (tendencies) which stand between the æsthetic contemplator and the ultimate Reality.

Had it been otherwise Shelley would not have written in this strain—

“ Oh ! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud !  
I fall upon the thorns of life ! I bleed ! ”

nor Wordsworth in this manner—

“ Me this uncharter'd freedom tires ;  
I feel the weight of chance desires. ”

Calm and serene moods which are brought about by an objective vision or subjective contemplation can, however, stimulate in the artist a desire to realise the Beauty which transcends the mind and which therefore is Truth itself.

#### IV

It is difficult indeed for man to rise to the heights of meditation and realise his Soul. Very few only have been able to accomplish this. But the world's scriptures have recorded instances of rare persons who have crossed this world which is the net-work of time, space and causation. They alone are the genuine artists of the world who have been able to realise Beauty as Truth. Their Vidya (knowledge) is Para (higher). The artists who realise their ideal of beauty and loveliness through the five forms of art—architecture, sculpture, painting, poetry and music—are specialists in Apra (lower) Vidya (knowledge). Life cannot attain its complete fulfilment without the higher knowledge. When the artists sincerely attempt to realise their ideal of beauty through form, sound or colour, they realise that it is difficult of attainment in the objective world and are possessed by a 'divine discontent'. An art-critic calls them 'transcendentalists'. Among them are Leonardo and Ruskin. “ To most people, when once their ideal rises to a certain height, thenceforth all execution seems vanity. ” They feel all works of art to be, at best, mockeries and make-shifts. Tami Koume, the great Japanese artist, declared : “ Through my art I ascend a step of the eternal staircase. ” Indeed it is his doctrine that art's highest function is the transcendence of art. “ True art has neither composition nor colour nor canvass : these are the inventions of artists. ” Art is verily a hand-maid of religion. Art can give us a temporary deliverance from the miseries of life and also inspire us with deep religious sentiments ; but religion alone shows us the way of Eternal Freedom.

## V

It may be justly said that æsthetics has its fulfilment in Bhakti Yoga or the path of devotion. What the artist does on the canvass or marble, the Bhakti Yogin does in his mind. He takes up some divine form (Ishtam) which he likes most, and directs his whole mind towards it. He worships it, meditates on it and tries to become one with it, as a result of which he attains differing degrees of spiritual realisation which may be dualistic, qualified monistic or monistic. He looks upon God in several relationships—Shanta, Dasya, Sakhya, Vatsalya, and Madhura. Thus human love in its varied forms is made to typify the love Divine, and God becomes master, father, mother, child, friend or lover to the devotee. In terms of dualism, God is outside the devotee; in qualified monism, the devotee realises himself as part of God; and in the highest monism, he and his Beloved are one. Thus the Gopis of Brindaban reached the last stage in their progress when they felt that they became absolutely merged in the object of their worship. Thus “in the end comes the full blaze of the light of love” in which the little self becomes one with infinite love itself, and “man begins thus to be transfigured before the presence of the light of love, and becoming cleansed of all impurities and vain desires of which his heart was more or less full realises at last the beautiful and inspiring truth that Love, Lover and the Beloved are one.”

In the Bhagavatam which is one of the greatest Puranas of the Hindus and is full of echoes from the divine realm of Love and Beauty, Sri Krishna in his spiritual discourses with Uddhava teaches him the way of meditation on God in His personal as well as impersonal aspects. He says—

सुकुमारमभिध्यायेत्सर्वाङ्गेषु मनो दधत्

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यो मनसाऽऽकृष्य तन्मनः ।

बुद्ध्या सारथिना धीरः प्रणयेन्मयि सर्वतः ॥

One should meditate on this form (meaning His own form) concentrating the mind on all the features. The man of self-control should withdraw the organs from the sense-objects with the help of the mind, and with the intellect as guide, direct the mind to My whole body.

तत्सर्वव्यापकं चित्तमाकृष्यैकत्र धारयेत् ।

नान्यानि चिन्तयेद्भूयः सुस्मितं भावयेन्मुखम् ॥

Then one should concentrate that mind—distributed all over My body—on one part, and think of the smiling countenance alone and nothing else.

तत्र लब्धपदं चित्तमाकृष्य व्योम्नि धारयेत् ।

तच्च त्यक्त्वा मदागोहो न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥

Drawing the mind which is concentrated on that, one should fix it on the Supreme Cause. Then leaving that too, one should rest on Me (meaning the pure Brahman) and think of nothing whatsoever.

It is meditation of this kind which is enjoined in the Sastras and personal instructions for which can be received from an illumined Guru, that can lead us to the realisation of the Divine Beauty.

We can receive inspiration and stimulus for the contemplation of beauty from any aspect of nature around us, any scene in human life, which enables us to forget ourselves. But great care must be exercised to exclude that which rouses the baser emotions of the mind. Such things as do not call up in us a pure and refined contemplation add one more link to the chain of the worldly life, and instead of delivering us from the "penal servitude of willing" or Samsara, only strengthen our bondage.

## VI

Man's adoration of Divine Beauty is expressed through what is known as "mystic literature"—literature produced by those who have had either a realisation of the Truth or at least an intellectual comprehension of it. It reveals to us the struggles that great saints and seers passed through and the severe agonies they suffered before their realising the Ideal, as also the supreme joy and peace they attained after their realisation. The beautiful and inspiring hymns in Sanskrit in praise of the Divine Mother, Rama, Krishna, Siva and other Deities, the poems of Thayumanavar, Appar, Sundaramoorthi, Thirujnana Sambandhar and Manickavasagar in Tamil, the Gita Govinda of Jayadev, the songs of Tukaram, Namadev, Kabir and Nanak, the mystic writings of philosophers like Plato, Socrates, Plotinus and Proclus, of saints like St. Francis of Assisi and Thomas-a-Kempis, of poets like Spenser and Blake, Browning and Thompson—all these contain,

more or less, highly ennobling ideas, elevate the reader's mind, and stimulate in him a desire for the contemplation and realisation of Divine Beauty. The Divine Mother in a Sanskrit hymn has been called कलावती (the Divine Artist) and कलारूपा (of the form of Art), and that art is the best—whether poetry, music, painting, architecture or sculpture—which purifies the mind and helps it in meditation on the Supreme which is declared by the Upanishads as आनन्दरूपममृतं यद्विभाति “The Immortal which shines forth full of bliss” and as शान्तं शिवं सुन्दरम् “Peaceful, Auspicious and Beautiful.” Art must not be content with aiming at perfection of form by merely imitating nature. It must have a spiritual element endowing it with wings with which to soar into the highest empyrean, and in the words of Havell, “bring down to earth something of the beauty of the things above.”

## MORAL INSTRUCTION IN SCHOOLS\*

BY SWAMI SIDDHESWARANANDA

**W**HEN Dr. Tagore compared the Indian educational system to the patented tins of imported food-stuff labelled “untouched by hand”, he made a statement on the subject which is nearer the truth than any other. Our present educational system does not afford any scope for the play of human feeling and the influence of intimate personal contact between the teachers and the taught. Education has become almost entirely mechanical. The personal contact of the teachers has rarely anything to do with the accomplishments of a scholastic and collegiate career. The moral urge in the awakening mind of the student finds no channel whatsoever for expression. In short there is no chastening influence on character which is the prime object of all education. The student is not made a *man*. Expert educationists have begun to feel this defect of modern education. They cry halt to this system bringing about the degeneration of the race. Many parents are feeling that their children will grow up better within their homes than in outside educational

\*Notes of a lecture delivered in the Training College, Mysore.

institutions. Schools have become mere grinding mills where even the family virtues instinctively imbibed by the child from the cradle and the nursery are as it were mercilessly crushed out. Undue precociousness and in many cases regressions from the elementary moral virtues are the main evils of modern schooling. A teacher with forty boys under him cannot be expected to give his attention to all individually. Even if it were possible, his low salary, weak health and family worries prevent him from spending a few happy hours in the company of his pupils. He has to teach the lessons and play the pedagogue all the year round with huge bundles of note-books and answer-papers to worry him and disturb even the peace of his home. He has to satisfy the inspector who carefully looks into the entries in his notes of lessons but rarely examines the character of the students placed under his charge. It is, however, a very happy sign of the times that the problem of imparting moral instruction in schools has come to the forefront in all educational circles.

Among the students two traits can be noticed generally. One of these is the impressionableness of childhood and the other is the idealism of adolescence. There is a tendency in young minds for hero-worship. Each student wants to emulate the virtues of his master. This tendency of his in his most impressionable age should be properly taken advantage of by the teacher in inducing in him a reverence for the ideals of life which he values most. His emotions and intellect should be given a higher turn which alone can enable the idealism which he possesses to be expressed. The corporate life of the present educational institutions, where for a few hours a crowd of students move with four or five teachers, cannot be expected to fulfil this purpose. Only that institution in which the students and teachers live together can successfully inspire the students with the ideals of the teacher. All schools must be residential institutions maintained with proper discipline and care, and placed under the efficient management of the right sort of teachers.

In the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home in Madras, such an ideal is being realised. All the students live within the premises of the school. The teachers share the social life of the students. Groups of students are directly under the supervision of ward-masters who are themselves teachers of the institution. Whether the students are on the playground, in dining hall, study or dormitory, the teacher

is the friend of the pupils and his presence, instead of being disliked, is very much sought after and welcomed by them ; for he shares with them their juvenile thoughts and feelings. The resident teacher devotes his whole time and attention to the welfare of the students. The entire establishment for the students is under the direct charge of a monk who spares no pains to make the whole institution highly efficient. The monk-in-charge directs the whole working of the institution through his ward-masters and other assistants. He holds before the students their own ideal, for the monk is a Vidyarthin (student) throughout his life. Thus the students have the advantage of receiving a training under a monk, which is so well praised by Evelyn Underhill in her book, *The Life of the Spirit and the Life of To-day*. The institution has, therefore, been able to partly realise the dream of Swami Vivekananda who wanted educational institutions to be placed under the charge of monks. It need hardly be mentioned that the success of the Jesuits in educational work is mostly due to their having properly qualified teachers who devote their whole life to the cause of education.

In the educational institution conducted by the Ramakrishna Mission at Deoghar near Patna the teaching staff is manned entirely by monks. The boys have no special moral instruction classes as such, because a pure atmosphere is kept up in the institution to make it possible for the boys to live and move only in a world of morality. It gives a creative impulse for the students to think, speak and act in healthy ways. This atmosphere we have to prepare as it is more important than the imparting of moral instructions in a formal manner. And how can such an atmosphere be created in our modern institutions ? The students have a knack of adjusting themselves to their surroundings and conforming themselves to the standards set up by their teacher, which unconsciously shape their minds. The teacher should therefore be a man whose life and character are worthy of emulation. For this there must be institutions to train up teachers and those who are to be admitted for the training must have a genuine love for the teaching profession and must not embrace it merely because they have no other way of earning their livelihood.

Indian students must grow up as Indians. They should not be aliens on their own soil. To them must therefore be imparted the culture of the race by one who is its votary.

The Indian culture holds up the ideal of morality in an unparalleled way and has a unique way of working out high ideals in the lives of men and women. It has a regulated way of taking one from the lower to the higher truths concerning life and its problems. It recognises the differences in the mental levels of people and so regulates its teachings that one can rise to higher and higher planes of life. The teacher should be one who can perceive these differences, and group students according to their different mental levels. He cannot frame one code of conduct for all his students.

Modern psychology has proved that sometimes the behaviour of students, which may appear to be very reprehensible and is generally taken serious objection to by teachers, would yield to a different interpretation if the teacher analyses the motives behind it. The wonders of the child mind are indeed very strange. The responsibility of the teacher is therefore as serious as that of the surgeon in his operation theatre. The tendency to lie, pilfer, tease or bully that we find in students cannot be explained away by references to their conscious plane. It has its origin in the sub-conscious, and can be corrected in an effective way only if the teacher can take the students into his confidence and help them to open their hearts to him. If, on the other hand, severe punishments are meted out, they may temporarily check the mind of the pupils only to make them worse and make them manifest their evil tendencies more strongly than before. The teacher must be able to educate their instincts and sub-conscious tendencies.

Says Evelyn Underhill—"By education I mean that deliberate adjustment of the whole environment of a growing creature which surrounds it with the most favourable influences and educes all its powers, giving it the most helpful conditions for its growth and development. Education should be the complete preparation of a growing thing for the fulness of life involving the evolution and balanced training of all its faculties, physical, mental and moral. It should train and refine senses, instinct, intellect, will and feeling." If the education that is imparted at the present day had been up to this mark, the very question for special moral instructions in schools would not have arisen.

The education of students can be successful only when the work is conducted in environments where the growing soul will receive the necessary incentive for self-expression. Under the present system the student is taken for a few hours to the



class-room where he is influenced by moral values which are totally different from those in his own home. The school rooms generally form the place where the repressed feelings of the students find vent; for he knows he is not under the vigilance of his parents and he can open, as it were, all the valves of his mind. This is how the young students learn all the vulgar expressions of their mother tongue, freely use them amongst friends, and, if they are not taken proper care of by their parents, fall into bad company which ruins both their body and mind.

As the young boy will be very inquisitive, the teacher should give him satisfactory answers to his questions. No intellectual difficulty should be left uncleared, nor its solution put off. For this the teacher must be a gifted man. He must have simplicity, enthusiasm, sympathy and a vigorous sense of humour.

In the period of transition from childhood to adolescence, the growing boy is to be guided by strong moral checks. The teacher should help his boys to live at high levels of thought and to act with noble impulses. Good teachers and good boys are of supreme value to the state. Morality cannot be taught but caught. The only way to keep the minds of the students elevated is by creating in them an intense interest in life. And the student's life is lived in the games-field, class-room and lodgings. He must be encouraged in any æsthetic taste he may possess. He must be made to feel the pulsations of life around him, be it social, industrial or political. He must be made to realise that on the right living of his life as a student depends his growing up as a member of a healthy society and citizen of the state. He must be kept intensely active. Those students who have disappointments written on their faces or are effeminate and shy are a grave danger to the other students with whom they come into contact, as they are most likely to spread their infectious mental disease. Such boys should be specially attended to, and all possible efforts should be made to make their lives bright and happy. In the mischievous student, there is a good material which requires but a little chiselling. One has only to provide a channel for the flow of his exuberant animal spirits.

It is the experience of many educationists that setting apart special hours in the class room for moral or spiritual instructions has not been very fruitful. The student does

not bring to these classes a willing mind. He has to be coaxed up to keep himself straight and attentive. This may be of value when the conditions for success are present. But in the absence of such conditions, they are likely to do even positive harm; for the student may come to have a prejudice against these classes, which it is difficult to remove in a child of tender years. In such cases it is better for the teacher to avail himself of the opportunity of introducing intelligent talks on morality and religion through lessons in history, literature and science. The present lecturer remembers well, how, when he was a student, the teacher used to explain passages from Longfellow's Builders and make it possible for the whole class to enthusiastically discuss with him many a moral and spiritual problem which confronts life. Such classes left a permanent impression on the plastic minds of the young students. Had there been a special class for moral instructions, the talks of the teacher might not have gone home into the pupils' minds, for they would have come to such classes with a yawning mouth. Moral instruction classes as such are not to be condemned but they fall flat unless a favourable environment is prepared for them.

The moral element is a common feature of all religions, and therefore to a class composed of students belonging to several religions, we can easily make an appeal on the moral side. It is always better to leave aside the ceremonial and mythological aspects of religion and hold up before the students only the moral element in it. The religion taught to the student must not be the religion of the rector or theologian. It should be a man-making process by which the student can be helped to build a sound body and mind, cultivate self-reliance and form a strong character. The relationship between the teacher and the taught must be enduring and capable of serving the highest interest in life. This can be achieved by making the idea of God dominant in the juvenile consciousness, by imparting such teachings for their physical and mental improvement as would be compatible with this idea, and by removing all obstacles to the discharging of their social duties.

In every school of the residential type, there must be a temple or worship room which can help the student to purify and strengthen his emotional nature by means of worship, devotional music, tasteful decorations and so forth which have an immense influence on his mind. If we do not give him

an opportunity to express his emotions in this way, he may try to satisfy himself by attending cinema, theatre, and concerts. Music has the power of purifying the emotions, and when pressed into the service of devotion it will exercise an elevating influence on the mind. But care should be taken to avoid sentimentalism of all kinds.

The most impressionable part of a student's life is spent in the class room. So the value of the training he receives from his teachers and in a corporate life cannot be over-estimated. In ancient India which had many Gurukulas, the need for imparting special moral instructions had not been felt, as Dharma formed a potent factor in educational life. The present educational system is fatal to our Dharma, as it teaches the young generation the culture of an alien race.

Vedanta recognises that each soul is potentially divine. We have only to remove the veils of ignorance hiding the divinity within. Therefore it was that Swami Vivekananda defined education as the manifestation of the perfection already in man. The teacher's function consists only in removing the obstacles to that manifestation. He cannot make a boy grow but can only help him in the process of growth by creating favourable environments.

Herbert Spencer has grouped the essentials of a right education under four headings: firstly, self-preservation in all its aspects—how to keep the body and the mind healthy and efficient, how to be self-supporting, and how to protect ourselves from external dangers in our environments; secondly, the training of the growing boy in his duties of life—parent-hood and its responsibilities in their widest sense; thirdly, the preparation of the student to take his place as a member of the society in which he is born; and lastly, handing on to him the cultural refinements which the past has given to us. It can be said without any exaggeration that the Indian ideal of life based on Dharma recognises all these essentials of a true education. All the educational experiments of the future should endeavour to preserve the Dharma of the race and produce men truly endowed with the manhood of the race—that manhood for which the Indian ideal has stood from time out of mind.

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# RAMAKRISHNA—THE GOD-MAN —OF MODERN INDIA\*

BY PROF. T. L. VASWANI

INDIA HAS THE BREAD OF LIFE

**I**T has been often said that India is a nation of idol-worshippers. India, I humbly submit, is a nation of hero-worshippers. And her highest heroes are the seers and saints. Therefore is India still the hope of humanity. Therefore, in spite of her subjection and poverty, India has still the bread of life for the nations.

## TEMPLE OF THE FUTURE

One of her seers and saints was Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Born in 1836, he passed away in 1886. Not long was his earth-life. Only 50 years! But he belongs to the Temple of the Future. Not yet have we known him well. Not yet has the world realised his true greatness. He is of the race of the Rishis.

## LINKS IN THE CHAIN

I was a boy when he passed away. But later years—of search and struggle, of thought and meditation—have woven round his blessed name a chain of reverence. And there are three links in that chain. The first link is Sadhu Hiranand of Sindh. When studying in the Presidency College, Calcutta, he met Paramahansa from time to time at Dakshineswar. Hiranand served the saint. Hiranand came back to Sindh in 1884.

## PROBLEM OF SUFFERING

Hiranand is in Hyderabad when he hears that Paramahansa is ill and has been removed to Calcutta for medical treatment. Hiranand comes all the way from Sindh to see and serve the saint. It is April 22, 1886, when Hiranand meets Paramahansa, then suffering from the "clergyman's sore throat," which developed into cancer. Hiranand can't

\*Summary of an address given at the Bihar Young Men's Institute, Patna.

bear to see the saint suffer. In his tender, sweet voice, Hiranand asks: "Why does the *Bhakta* of God suffer?" A significant question! He may understand why the wicked suffer. But the just, the pure, the *Bhaktas*, the saints—why suffer they? Is the universe unjust or un-moral? Hiranand's question is significant. Yet more significant is Ramakrishna's answer. He looks at Hiranand and says: "Only the body suffers—you understand?" Yes, suffering is meaningful *Maya*! It is *Sthula Sarira* which suffers, decays, dies, not we, the *Atman*. That is incorruptible, immortal, destined for life in Love ineffable.

#### A GROUP-SOUL

My next link in the chain of reverence I spoke of is Sri Keshub Chandra Sen. Studying him, I was drawn more and more to Sri Ramakrishna. Keshub linked me with Paramahansa. I do not think of them as separate. The twain were a group-soul.\* Each loved the other, for each moved in a common spiritual atmosphere; each was a prophet of God-consciousness. One day Paramahansa comes to the Brahmo Samaj; Keshub is giving a discourse; he sees Paramahansa, leaves the discourse unfinished, comes down from the pulpit and greets the saint. Keshub's love was beautiful. And how tender Ramakrishna's! Keshub is expected at Dakshineswar. Paramahansa hears some sound and asks a disciple to go and see if Keshub is coming. The disciple returns to report that Keshub is not come. Sound again! "Is Keshub coming?"—asks Paramahansa again. "No," answers the disciple. Then says Paramahansa: "The rustling of leaves makes Radha exclaim 'Oh! here comes my Beloved.' Keshub always tantalises me thus!" What tender love in these beautiful words! Keshub wrote and spoke of Paramahansa as "the Saint of Dakshineswar." And Paramahansa hearing some of his disciples criticise Keshub

\*Speaking of Sri Ramakrishna's relation with Sri Keshub Chandra Sen, Prof. Max Muller observes in his "Ramakrishna—His Life and Sayings": "Keshub was leading a life of prayer and seclusion. Ramakrishna heard of him, went to see him. Keshub was so much impressed with the simple words, full of the highest knowledge, the wonderful love of God, and the deep trances of Sri Ramakrishna, that he began to come often and often to him. . . . A strong and deep love grew up between the two, and Keshub's whole life became changed till, a few years later, he proclaimed his views of religion as the New Dispensation, which was nothing but a partial representation of the truths which Ramakrishna had taught for a long time."—Ed., *V. K.*

at a time when a big storm of criticisms was blowing over Keshub's head, said: "Don't criticise Keshub, he is one of the greatest *Bhaktas* of God." On another occasion when a disciple asked, "Sir! What do you think of Keshub?" the Paramhansa answered: "Oh! he is a saint of God!" Keshub's illness in 1883 made Paramahansa very anxious and he prayed to the Divine Mother for Keshub's recovery: "Whom shall I talk to, Mother, if Keshub is withdrawn?"

#### THE BEAUTIFUL ROSE

A third link in the claim was Upadhaya Brahmabandhava, one of the ablest interpreters of the ancient ideal, one of the purest patriots history has known. He lived for India; he died for India. He spoke to me often of Paramahansa, gave me incident after incident of his life, repeated to me some of his sayings. "How beautiful the rose—say the English-educated. But they do not say—How divine the rose! They do not see in the rose the beauty of my Mother!" So said Ramakrishna one day. This story was told me by Upadhaya Brahmabandhava. I do not know if this story has gone into the books about Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.\*

#### BROTHERHOOD OF THE NATION

Years ago I visited the Belur Math. A kind Sannyasin greeted me. "Whence do you come?" he asked. "From Sindh," I said. "From the Province of Hiranand?" he

\*Similar ideas appear in slightly different forms in some of the books about Sri Ramakrishna. The original Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna in Bengali by M. contains many such passages of which we translate the following for our readers. In it Sri Ramakrishna addressing some devotee says at one place: "Do you know the way in which worldly people speak of God? It is like this .....A modern educated young man picks up a flower while walking in a garden and remarks to his friend—'What a beautiful flower God has made!'

"Why do people speak so much of the Lord's glory? Everybody is struck with wonder to see the rich man's garden containing beautiful plants and flowers. But how many want to know the owner? Very few.....However, he who seeks God—the Author of everything—with a yearning heart finds Him."

Describing one of his visions of the Divine, Sri Ramakrishna thus says in another place: "(After the realisation of Brahman) I began to see God in everything. One day I was plucking Vilwa leaves. A little of the bark from the branch came out along with the leaves. I saw the tree was permeated by the Divine Spirit and I felt pain. When I went to pick up grass, I saw again the same vision. One day I was about to pluck flowers. It seemed as if the plants and flowers had been already offered in worship to the Virat Purusha and were adorning His head."—Ed., F. K.

exclaimed. And I saw the beautiful room of Vivekananda and another little room in which were brought together some of the things associated with the life of Paramahansa. Then I learnt of his reverence for all religions, all Prophets. Yes, he loved Muhammad, and in his room at Dakshineswar incense was burnt before a picture of Jesus. In this message of reverence for all Prophets and the synthesis of all religions is the hope of the future. It is India's message to the nations. Muhammad is mine—saith the soul of India. And Jesus is mine! And the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity, I humbly submit, will be solved in no external way. A human, spiritual solution is the only adequate solution. Muhammad is yours, ye sons of the Rishis, and Krishna is yours, ye children of Islam! The different religions are different expressions of the one Divine Life. On this faith may you build a mighty brotherhood of the nations against which the dark forces of reaction and imperialism may battle in vain.

#### BROOMSTICK "

Thinking of Paramahansa, I think something of St. Theresa, something of St. Francis of Assisi. I love to think of Ramakrishna as the Child-man of the 19th century. And as a psychic, he should be an object of deep interest and study to students of new psychology and physico-psychological science and indeed to all who would study scientifically the hidden Self of man!

A spiritual giant, he always felt he was a simple child of the Divine Mother. To a rich man the saint explains how the name of God purifies and strengthens. The rich man is annoyed; who is this poor "Paramahansa" to teach him—the man of wealth? He says to Ramakrishna: "Have you been able to know everything?" And the saint with folded hands and in a child-like manner answers: "I do not know everything; but a broomstick, unclean in itself, may yet sweep a little corner and make it clean!" A logician proud of his learning comes to the saint and asks: "Knowledge, knower and object known: what is the difference between them?" The saint replies: "I do not know the subtleties of logic. I only know that I am a child of the Mother Divine!" Ramakrishna was always so simple, so artless, so spontaneous, so humble, so child-like! Therefore he lives. Therefore his influence is growing day by day. Your big man distinguished to-day, is

extinguished to-morrow. But Sri Ramakrishna has inspired a flame and a message for generations unborn.

#### INDIA THE MOTHER OF SAGES

India! My Motherland! The very voices of the Infinite are in the atmosphere around Thee! And in Thy Heart is the memory of many a mighty sage who hath communed with Eternity. One such was Ramakrishna. He despised not the earth, but deemed it sacred as a playground of the Deity. He conquered the flesh and revered the body as a temple of the soul. He loved God with all the yearning of his soul: "Wherein lies the strength of a seeker?" he asked. And he himself answered the question thus: "The strength of the seeker is in his tears." Yes, tears are a treasure—tears of love and longing. As Sri Ramakrishna said: "Call Him constantly." Many call Him, but with the lips only. Many, again, there are who call Him but with the mind only. And the voice of the mind is weak. He cometh in answer to the call of the heart. For dear to Him, the Lord of Love, is every soul that truly seeketh Him, and more precious than the purity of the pious and more fragrant than the virtue of the gods is the garland of tears placed at His Lotus-Foot by a broken human heart.

#### NOTES AND COMMENTS

##### A CRUSADE AGAINST SCIENCE

It is amusing as well as interesting to note that a crusade is being carried on against science by several bigoted theologians in some of the Southern States of America. The well-known 'monkey trial' in Tennessee in which Prof. J. T. Scopes was prosecuted and fined in July last for teaching his students the theory of evolution in accordance with the curriculum of studies in the State is still green in the memory of all. A ban of more recent date issued by another state in U. S. A., which on the strength of a bill signed by the Governor of Mississippi forbids teachers in State-supported schools, under a penalty of \$ 500 and a cancellation of contract, to teach that "man is ascended or descended from the lower order of animals" bears another eloquent testimony to the existing conflict between science and dogma in the Southern American States. The proposals of some back-country men to inflict the horrid punishment of "burning at the stake" on the innocent victims, which, however, was fortunately rejected, cannot but excite the contemptuous laughter of anyone who has the smallest iota of common sense.



As the Times wrote sometime back Texas, Mississippi and Tennessee form a trio of Southern States where the teaching of evolution is prohibited. Texas as yet has not passed any law against evolution, but the State Text-book Commission recently ordered all references to evolution to be eliminated from all text-books, all definitions of evolution from dictionaries, and all chapters from standard works on biology. The City Board of Education of Atlanta, Georgia strictly prohibits the teaching of evolution while Kentucky is organising a vigorous campaign against Darwinian doctrines. Commenting on these fanatic and foolish steps to check the progress of scientific thought, nay even to throttle it, a writer observes: "That similar human props were always employed to stave off the onward march of science and enlightenment, thus trying to keep the dogmas of the Bible immune from their impact is something with which a student of cultural history is familiar and the fate which they share is also a familiar phenomenon."

How can we reconcile the scientific theory of evolution with religion? The basis for such harmony is furnished by the philosophy of the Hindus.

Science does not say whether "the tendency to vary" of evolution is an indefinite process or is limited by a definite law. The Hindu philosophers hold that evolution is not a process which goes on for ever. They go a step beyond modern science and say that there is nothing in the end of evolution which was not also in its beginning. Prior to evolution what is evolved must have existed in an involutioned state; thus every evolution is preceded by an involution. According to this, the intelligence of man or the perfection of a Christ or a Buddha exists already in the most minute protoplasm, though in a latent condition. It is gradually unfolding itself by an inward urge which is the cause of the tendency to vary, and the process of unfoldment is effected by slow and gradual change of physical bodies accompanied by a greater and greater "release of consciousness." Thus there is evolution of matter and along with it also the manifestation of spirit which is covered up in the folds of matter.

Evolution was known in India not less than four thousand years ago. The great Indian philosopher and scientist, Patanjali, refers to it in his Yoga Sutras as the process of "the infilling of nature." He means that the struggle for evolution removes all obstacles to it and in the highest man divinity manifests itself by its own nature, just as water flows of itself to a field when the impediments are cleared. The urge for evolution is therefore from within a being, and not from without.

That along with the evolution of physical forms, there is also a corresponding evolution of intelligence or a progressive release of consciousness has not been sufficiently recognised by Darwin. What happens to the instinct in the animal and to the intelligence in man at the time of death? And where do they come from? Bergson is of opinion that instinct, intelligence and intuition or the divine faculty of saints and sages are three independent faculties finding each its highest expression in ants, bees and wasps, in man and in God-men.

He says they become extinct with the death of these beings. But the explanation given by Vedanta is more logical and rational. It tells us that the instinct of the animal evolves into intelligence in man and this again evolves into intuition in the seers of Truth.

The Christian theologians therefore need not see in the theory of evolution a strong and merciless enemy of theirs who will break into pieces the citadel of their faith. Man is made in the image of God. He comes from Him and goes to Him at the end of his life's journey. What is called evolution is only of matter, and the manifestation of spirit is its concomitant.

Religion can grow only in an atmosphere of freedom. What is the use of maintaining pet theological dogmas which are incompatible with science and prejudicial to the interests of religion? Religion in its true sense is not a contradiction but a fulfilment of science.

### BROTHERHOOD IN ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

In the course of an interesting article on Universal Brotherhood in Islam and Christianity in a recent number of the Islamic Review, a writer says: "The democracy which is so much immortalised in the pages of Plato and Aristotle as having originated in the ancient Greeks reveals itself as an insignificant and negligible factor to one who investigates the true underlying principles of the practical democracy of Islam." Continuing he observes also that the democracy of Europe or America or of the self-governing colonies of the British Empire is firmly consolidated on materialism and has none other ulterior motive than the aggrandisement of the weaker classes, and besides, it lacks that basic element of humanity on which alone can be reared the fabric of the practical brotherhood of mankind.

Describing the conditions that obtain at the present day in several countries of the West the writer cites instances the veracity of which cannot be challenged, such as the oppression of the Christian Negro by the American Christian, the pitiable plight of the South African Indian, the barring of the doors of Australia against her own coloured children and the atrocities committed by the Greeks in Asia Minor and by the French in Damascus. This lack of the sense of solidarity and feeling of brotherhood is manifest not only in the field of politics but also in the spheres of religion, society and commerce.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the followers of Islam are knit together by stronger ties of brotherhood than the followers of many other religions. The history of Islam bears ample testimony to the fact that its adherents have been able to realise the practical idea of brotherhood as embodied in the precepts of Mohammed who said: "All Muslims are like one foundation, some parts strengthening others; in such a way they support each other" "There is no distinction of caste or colour or of grades of society in Islamic brotherhood. In whatever parts of the world Islam has penetrated, it has succeeded to a great extent in instilling this strong sense of solidarity and unity into the minds of those who have embraced it.

It is true that Christianity does not possess such a strong unifying power as Islam. But it is also equally true that there is missing in the Islamic brotherhood that width of catholicity and universal spirit of fraternity which has the power to create "the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the world."

For this, however, the religion of Islam is no more to blame than any other religion. Like every other true and great religion, it is capable of serving as a most potent factor which can bring into being a real and universal brotherhood. Mohammed has taught: "Assist every person oppressed, whether he be Muslim or non-Muslim." Jesus also has exhorted his followers in the words: "Love thy neighbour as thyself." Says Hinduism: "He who sees the Self in all beings, realises the equality of all, attains to the supreme state of Brahman." But unfortunately the scriptures are interpreted more or less narrowly, and this chokes the true spirit of religion which is universal and lends support to the keeping up of all sorts of invidious distinctions between the followers of one creed and another. It seems that Mohammedan theologians have overlooked the universal aspects of their religion and have unduly emphasised at the same time such portions of the teachings of Mohammed as "Know that every Muslim is the brother of every other. All of you are equal. Ye are all of one brotherhood." Has not their prophet also said "The best of men is he from whom good accrueth to all humanity. All God's creatures are his family; and he is most beloved of God who trieth to do most good to God's creatures"? If the Mohammedans will try to realise this universal aspect of their Prophet's teachings, religious intolerance and fanaticism, so often roused up in them by the scheming propagandist, will be a thing of the past. And the world will advance to no small extent to the realisation of the true brotherhood of man, which is a consummation devoutly to be wished.

#### THE PROBLEM OF AGRICULTURE IN INDIA

India is primarily an agricultural country. But the condition of her peasantry, instead of being prosperous, is precarious in the extreme. The vast majority of our agriculturists are poor men of small holdings. As matters stand now, they also lack a real interest in the land they cultivate. The present land system is mainly responsible for this. No great improvement in agriculture can be effected unless this system is improved and the cultivator is induced to take a greater interest in the land.

In a thought-provoking article contributed to the *Modern Review* for June, Dr. Naresh Chandra Sengupta deals with some of the outstanding agricultural problems in Bengal. The writer clearly points out that the divided ownership of land is the main cause of the agricultural backwardness of the province. The Zemindars and the Talukdars are recognised by law as proprietors of the land. But in fact they are not its real owners, but are mere "rent receivers" having in most cases middlemen of various grades between them and the Raiyats. And this rent again has very little to do with the produce of the land.

So long as things go on smoothly, the Raiyat has the exclusive right of possession and cultivation. But he in many cases sublets his hold-

ing, instead of cultivating it himself. The Raiyats and the under-Raiyats may again have a Burgadar who cultivates the land on the condition of giving a share of the produce to the former. As Dr. Sengupta shows—"In this way a large quantity of land is now being cultivated by men who have no right to the Raiyati. The tenure on which these actual cultivators hold the land is of a more or less precarious character."

Under these circumstances neither the Zemindars, nor the Talukdars, nor the middlemen, nor the Raiyats have any real interest in the soil, or even any capacity to improve it. The present land system stands self-condemned. No agricultural improvement can possibly be made until it is got rid of. "The only sensible way of doing it," suggests the writer, "and the only one which would make land improvement schemes possible would be to make the actual cultivator the undivided proprietor of the land he cultivates. This would mean the buying off of present owners and middlemen."

The change suggested is revolutionary. If it is attempted it will create a strong opposition in the country, and make all agricultural improvements impossible at least for sometime to come. The more practical step, by which, however, the object may be achieved in a less perfect and less violent manner is, as the writer himself suggests, to reduce the present rights of the proprietors "to an incorporeal right to the rent without ownership of land." Anyway, the actual cultivator must be made to feel a living interest in the soil. When this is done, agricultural improvement is bound to take place as a matter of course.

#### MORAL BEAUTY OF BUDDHA'S TEACHINGS

The full moon of Vaisakh is very important and auspicious to the Buddhists. It is the day not only of the nativity but also of the enlightenment and final Nirvana of the Tathagata who came "for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many." It is observed by one-third of the population of the world, which to-day owes allegiance to Lord Buddha. It is being celebrated at many places in India in recent years, and the sublime ideals as lived and preached by the Enlightened One are also appealing more and more to an ever-increasing number of people. Bombay too celebrated the anniversary this year in a befitting manner under the presidency of Mr. C. F. Andrews.

Lord Buddha was the embodiment of love and compassion. The philosophy of life that he preached was in reality the Advaita or monism as realised by the great sages of ancient India long before his illumination under the Bo tree at Buddha Gaya. But the great speciality of Lord Buddha lay in the fact that he went to the logical conclusion of Advaita, gave it a very practical turn and spread it broadcast among the masses. This brought about a tremendous improvement in their moral and spiritual life. As Swami Vivekananda has observed, "At first some monks got hold of it (Advaita) and took it to the forest, and so it came to be called the "Forest Philosophy." By the mercy of the Lord, the Buddha came and preached it to the masses, and the whole nation became Buddhists." Mr. Andrews spoke in much the same strain in his presidential address at the Buddha anniversary in Bombay.

There were "enlightened" ones before Gautama. "But their inspiration," observed Mr. Andrews, "was on the whole somewhat local. They did not penetrate permanently and vitally the masses of mankind. The truths they foreshadowed did not reach down to the common people—the slave, the outcaste, the savage, and aboriginal. . . . They did not actually create a new and vital transformation in the mass of the human race, lifting it almost bodily from the dust and setting it once and for all on a higher spiritual plane. But Gautama, the Buddha, appears to me to have actually achieved this. The whole human history took a new turn from the date of his enlightenment under the Bo tree."

The dynamic teachings of Lord Buddha had a great influence on the Indian people. Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim, wrote in his "Travels in India" about the Indians—"They are of hasty and irresolute temperaments, but of pure moral principles. They will not take anything wrongfully, and they yield more than fairness requires. They fear the retribution for sins in their lives, and make light of what conduct produces in this life. They do not practise deceit and they keep their sworn obligations." But things have changed a great deal since these glorious days of India's history! Hatred, selfishness, intolerance and other vices are now eating into the vitals of the Indian people. "I have felt," said Mr. Andrews, "that in our present crisis of Indian history, the lesson of his universal moral ideal is needed most of all." India certainly stands in urgent need of the universal moral ideal of Buddha—of Love, Compassion and Tolerance which he taught two thousand and five hundred years ago. Lord Buddha's teachings are not foreign to Indian culture. They are in fact the teachings of the ancient Rishis of India, preached with a new force and meaning. As he himself acknowledged, the path that he showed was the Aryan path and the truths that he proclaimed were the Aryan truths.

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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE INDIAN COLONY OF CHAMPA, by Phanindranath Bose. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 162. Price Cloth Rs. 2.

The materials for this little interesting book have been gathered from the works of French scholars to whose labours in the field of research as regards Champa the author pays a fitting tribute. The author has traced Champa to be the name given to the colony of the Hindus, which grew up and flourished in Indo-China for about 1,200 years commencing from about the first or the second century of the Christian era and comprised the provinces of Quang-nam and Binh Thuan. It is not clearly known from what part of India the colonization took place. Thirteen dynasties appear to have ruled over the Kingdom of Champa, and the last king of the twelfth dynasty having been defeated by the Annamite Emperor, the Indian royal family which

had been keeping the torch of Hindu religion and culture aglow ceased to exist though to a certain extent the civilization and culture of the Hindu race is still preserved among the Chams, the indigenous people of the Kingdom of Champa. The conquest of Champa by the Indians has, as the author clearly shows, been not only a physical conquest but also a cultural one. During the period of rule by the thirteen dynasties, the Hindu art and sculpture and the Hindu system of caste and other social institutions were introduced, and established under the direct patronage of the rulers who were themselves well-versed—at any rate most of them—in the Hindu Sastras and the six systems of the Hindu philosophy. Many Hindu temples were erected by them and adequate provisions made for their maintenance. Buddhism made an attempt to establish itself in the little Kingdom of Champa but on account of the strong leaning which most of its rulers had for the Hindu gods and goddesses, it failed to secure a footing. A perusal of the book will impress the reader how the Indians in those days were able to keep up the torch of Indian civilization and culture outside their motherland and how they did it in the small Kingdom of Champa amidst uncongenial surroundings and circumstances for more than 1,200 years. It will surely stimulate him to contribute his own quota, should opportunity ever present itself, to the accomplishment of the Hindu ideal of disseminating broadcast the spiritual culture of which the Hindus have been ordained to be the custodians by Providence.

**SOME SOCIAL SKETCHES OF SOUTH INDIAN LIFE**, by Rao Sahib Ramaswami Sivan, B. A., Agricultural College, Coimbatore. Pp. 89. Price As. 6.

It can be inferred from a reading of these sketches which originally appeared as serial stories in *The New India* that the author is an ardent and sincere social reformer. By means of dialogues, he brings home to us the need for eradicating such evils as child marriage and the demand of *varasulkam* (dowry). Young men and women should be given such an education as will make them manly and noble men and worthy and strong-minded women. Mr. and Mrs. Sivasankara Sastri of these sketches are types of sensible persons by whose advice parents and young boys and girls can profit themselves.

**GNOSTICISM**, by Mary W. Barrie, M. A. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 114. Price: Wrapper Re. 1/4, Cloth Rs. 2.

This book endeavours to trace the sources and growth of Gnosticism and claims to dispel some wrong notions that exist about it in certain quarters. As it has a close connection with Christian Theology and Science, it may interest the Christian world particularly. There is everywhere the need of a religion which can demonstrate that life is one and universal, and Gnosticism is expounded in this little volume as this religion. The origin and development of Gnosticism and its tenets and principles the author has no doubt taken pains to elucidate, but unfortunately, the exposition has rather been obscured by the introduction of symbols, numbers and figures which have been added as Appendix and referred to in the book.

**THEOSOPHY AS THE BASIC UNITY OF NATIONAL LIFE.** Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 96. Price : Board Re. 1 ; Cloth Re. 1-8-0.

This book is a reprint of the four Convention lectures delivered in Bombay at the forty-ninth anniversary of the Theosophical Society, in December 1924.

**THE FIRE OF CREATION**, by J. J. Van Der Leeuw LL. D., with a foreword by C. Jinarajadasa. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 250. Price Rs. 4-8-0.

This is the outcome of a series of talks given to a group of students interested "in the meaning and work of the Third Person of the Divine Trinity, He who in the Christian religion is called God the Holy Ghost".

**RAMANAND TO RAM TIRATH.** Published by Messrs. G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. Pp. 256. Price Re. 1-8-0.

This is a very useful book recounting the lives and teachings of some of the North Indian saints from Ramanand to Ram Tirath. It contains sketches of Ramanand and Kabir, Nanak and the Sikh Gurus, Ravi Das—the Chamar saint—and Mira Bai—the ascetic queen of Chitor—, Vallabhacharya and Tulasi Das, and Swamis Virajananda, Dayananda and Ram Tirath. The teachings of the Sikh Gurus and those of the Vaishnavite reformers like Ramananda and Ravidas, were mostly directed to the freeing of religion from superstitions, and remind one of the great Protestant movement of Europe. That these great saints appeared at a time when the Mohammedans were the rulers of the country and democratised the truths of Hinduism through their immortal songs and rapturous hymns in the vernaculars testifies to the fact that the fire of Indian religious consciousness has always been kept alive, and though there was a diminution of its lustre during unfavourable times, it could never be extinguished. We commend the book to those who want to know something of the history of Hinduism from the days of the Vaishnava movement in North India up to recent times.

**TOWARDS DISCIPLESHIP**, by J. Krishnamurti. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 144. Price : Board Rs. 1-8-0, Cloth Rs. 2-4-0.

This contains a series of informal talks on discipleship given to a coterie of young friends in 1924 in Pergine, Trento, Italy.

**POEMS TO THE MASTER**, by Mary C. A. Bright. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 68. Price : Re. 1.

These poems are dedicated to the Masters who are believed to have inspired the Theosophical movement.

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## NEWS AND REPORTS

### FAREWELL ADDRESS TO SWAMI SHARVANANDA

On 3rd June, the day of his departure from Madras, Srimat Swami Sharvananda was given a farewell address by the Sri Satchidananda Sangha in a meeting held in the Hindu High School Hall, Triplicane. The meeting was presided over by Mr. K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A., B.L., Sub-Judge, who paid a glowing tribute to the Swami.

The address which was read by Mr. P. V. Pasupathy Mudaliar, one of the secretaries of the Sangha, referred to the manifold activities of the Swami as President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission for the last fifteen years. It mentioned also how he had travelled to distant places like Bombay, Nagpur, Mysore and Cooch Behar in India and to Ceylon, Burma, Federated Malay States, Java and Bally outside India to spread the message of the Vedanta. It wound up with an eloquent expression of the regard and gratitude of the Sangha to the Swami who had inspired and guided its activities since its inception.

The Swami in reply to the address expressed how he had an opportunity of serving the Lord by serving his fellowmen. He remarked that he remembered with pride the two characteristics of Madras, viz., its simplicity of life and the purity of its Vedic culture. He also said that his present retirement was the outcome of a hankering in him to lead a purely meditative life.

Dewan Bahadur A. V. Ramalinga Iyer. Prof. P. N. Srinivasachari and Dr. C. Natesa Mudaliar next spoke in appreciation of the services rendered by Swami Sharvananda to the cause of religion. The meeting terminated with a vote of thanks to the chair.

### SRI RAMAKRISHNA MANDIRAM, OOTACAMUND

Active steps are being taken to establish a branch of the Mission at Ootacamund to minister to the spiritual needs of the people of the Nilgiris District. The inhabitants of these hills are isolated from the plains and are consequently denied all the amenities, social and religious, which people in the plains ordinarily enjoy. The presence of the aboriginal classes in the district offers an almost inexhaustible scope for work among them. The permanent residents of Ootacamund, many of whom are Government servants and tradesmen, have also been feeling the want of a spiritual guide among them for a long time. Several spasmodic efforts were made in previous years without any decided success. In 1924, when His Holiness Srimat Swami Shivananda, President of the Ramakrishna Mission, was staying at Coonoor, the public of Ootacamund approached him and placed their representations before him. He readily consented to help them in establishing a branch of the Mission at Ootacamund. A local Committee was formed, which undertook to take the preliminary steps necessary to found an Ashrama. A free gift of a site measuring two acres was made by an old devotee,



a washerman by-caste. The situation of this site is eminently fitted for an Ashrama. It commands a beautiful scenery. Though it is secluded from the town, it is easily reached and is only ten minutes' walk from the central market. It lies on the eastern side of the ridge leading from the Elk Hill towards the Bishop's Town. Sri Hathiramjee Mutt, the place of the Mahant of Tirupati, is also closely situated. In July 1924 His Holiness Srimat Swami Shivananda turned the first soil of the foundation on an auspicious day. Vigorous steps were then taken to collect subscriptions. Mr. Mandharam Rungiah Chettiar contributed Rs. 2,000 towards the erection of the Central Hall. And the plans and estimates were also drawn up.

The building consists of a Shrine Room, opening into a hall 20 by 30 feet, to which are attached two living rooms. A separate kitchen block is also provided. The estimate runs to about eleven thousand rupees. The hall and the living rooms will shortly be ready. The Shrine Room will be completed in about two months. The kitchen block is yet to be begun. The Maharajas of Mysore, Baroda and Jodhpur have been approached for help by the Local Committee. The Rajas of Kallikotta, Kirlampudi and Chikati have contributed towards the construction of the building. It is expected that the Ashrama will be opened in another month, and actual work and worship will begin under the auspices of His Holiness Srimat Swami Shivananda who is now at Ootacamund. For the present, religious instruction will be given to the students in the educational institutions and also to the general public by the Swamis who will be accommodated in the Mandiram. The Swamis will also visit the Badaga villages for propaganda and preaching work. After the establishment of the Mandiram it is intended to open an industrial school and an orphanage as adjuncts to the Ashrama. The Local Committee is already busy in making arrangement for the maintenance of the Ashrama.

#### VEDANTA WORK IN SAN FRANCISCO

A member of the Vedanta Society of San Francisco writes :—

During the month of April the members and followers of the San Francisco Vedanta Society were privileged to have the visit of Swami Bodhananda, head of the New York centre. He was very cordially received by Swami Prakashananda who made his stay at the Hindu Temple headquarters very agreeable. During his stay Swami Bodhananda gave four illuminating discourses on the teachings of the Gita every Tuesday evening. He also delivered four forceful and highly interesting Sunday public lectures on the following topics—The Common Goal of Religions, The Power of Concentration, Evolution, and, The Power of Silence.

The special Easter service was held at the Temple on 4th April by Swami Prakashananda who chose "The Awakening of Soul Consciousness" as the fitting subject for the occasion. He also spoke at the Sunday morning services during the month of April on the following subjects—Individuality and Cosmic Consciousness, How to Enter the Realm of Inspiration, How to Overcome our Sensitive Nature. The Thursday classes on the Upanishads with a short meditation were

conducted as usual by the Swami. All the lectures and class discourses were attended by large and appreciative audiences. Swami Bodhananda left San Francisco deeply impressed with the growth and increasing interest of the work here at the Temple and expressed his intention of soon visiting it again. He returned to New York via Portland, Oregon, where he gave a few lectures at the centre newly established by Swami Prabhavananda. He also visited and lectured at the neighbouring cities of Tacoma and Seattle, Washington.

#### SRI RAMAKRISHNA STUDENTS' HOME, JAFFNA

The Ramakrishna Society of Jaffna was feeling the need for establishing a Students' Home in Jaffna with a view to provide free board and education to helpless orphans and poor deserving students. In order to remove this want, Swami Vipulananda, the President of the Society, and some friends visited Colombo in April last and made an appeal for the necessary funds, which met with a ready and adequate response. It was then decided to start a Home for boys with six students, and increase the number gradually as circumstances would permit. The Home was formally opened on Sunday, the 6th June, by Swami Vipulananda, and three students were admitted. The Swami also delivered an instructive speech on Gurukula Life, dwelling on the great necessity for such an institution for Hindu boys who sometimes were unfortunately lost to the community on account of the indifference of the Hindus to their welfare. We wish all success to this new institution.

#### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENTS' HOME, CALCUTTA

The work of this educational institution is increasing in dimension and usefulness. Twenty-seven students were staying in the Home during the year 1925, of whom five appeared for the I. Sc., one for the I. A., and another for the M. A. examinations and passed creditably. A new feature of the Home is the Students' Self-help Syndicate which gives the students an opportunity of earning a portion of the cost of their education, by preparing exercise books and selling books on commission. A publication department also has been opened in the Home which is intended to be incorporated with the Syndicate in the future.

The receipts during the year amounted to Rs. 6,239-1-0 and disbursements to Rs. 5,536-12-0, leaving a balance of Rs. 702-5-0. This with the last year's balance of Rs. 8,651-0-6 makes a total balance of Rs. 9,353-5-6. The Home stands in urgent need of a permanent residence of its own and appeals for help. Subscriptions may be kindly sent to the Secretary of the Home, or to the President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur, Howrah.

#### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, BELUR, HOWRAH

The report for the years 1924 and 1925 shows a development in the work of the institution. The industrial school is located in the compound of the Belur Math itself and the students are accommodated

in a rented building near the Math. The boys are given a general elementary education, besides a course of practical training in spinning, weaving, tailoring and carpentry. So far twenty-three boys have finished their course of spinning and weaving and have started independent work in this line. There are at present eleven students on the roll.

The institution requires a permanent building for the school and boarding house, and funds for additional looms, tailoring outfits and carpentry instruments as well as for the maintenance of the boarders. Contributions can be sent to the Superintendent of the school or to the President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur, Howrah.

#### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION HOME OF SERVICE, BENARES

We are glad to find from the report that the philanthropic activities of the Home have been steadily growing since its inception in 1900.

The Indoor General Hospital, which contains 108 beds, admitted during the year 1456 persons, of whom 388 were picked up by the workers of the Home from the streets, lanes and bathing Ghats of Benares. The Outdoor Dispensary rendered medical relief to 44,442 people including repeated cases. The Home also gave outdoor relief by way of weekly doles of rice and money to a large number of invalids as also to poor ladies of respectable families. Besides rendering other forms of service, the Home maintained 4 invalids in the Male Invalids' Block, supported 12 helpless women in the separate Home for Women on the banks of the Ganges, and admitted in the Girls' Home 7 girls who received training in the general work of the female hospital along with their education.

The authorities of the Sevashram propose to build a spacious block for helpless women, and also to open a training centre for nurses in the female department of the hospital.

The balance sheet of the Home for the year 1925 shows a receipt of Rs. 31,751-6-2 and an expenditure of Rs. 30,635-15-5, thus leaving a balance of Rs. 1,115-6-9. The Home has to spend an average sum of Rs. 80 per day.

This non-sectarian charitable institution stands in urgent need of support by the generous public to meet the ever-increasing demands on its service in the holy city of Benares. Contributions may be kindly sent to the Hon. Asst. Secretary, The Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Benares City, U. P.

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# THE VEDANTA KESARI

" Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

" Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want

And the first step in getting strength is to uphold

The Upanishad and believe that ' I am the Atman.' "

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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## PRAYER

तेजोऽसि तेजो मयि धेहि । वीर्यमसि वीर्यं मयि धेहि ।

बलमसि बलं मयि धेहि । ओजोऽसि ओजो मयि धेहि ।

मन्युरसि मन्युं मयि धेहि । सहोऽसि सहो मयि धेहि ।

O Lord ! Thou art infinite energy ; do Thou fill me with energy. Thou art infinite virility ; do Thou endow me with virility. Thou art infinite strength ; do Thou inspire me with strength. Thou art infinite power ; do Thou grant me power. Thou art infinite courage ; do Thou give me courage. Thou art infinite fortitude. Do Thou steel me with fortitude.

—YAJUR VEDA

असतो मा सद्गमय । तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय । मृत्योर्माऽमृतं गमय ।

From the unreal lead me to the Real. From darkness lead me to Light. From death lead me to Immortality.

—BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD

## SPIRITUAL TALKS WITH SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

[The Swami—who was looked upon by Sri Ramakrishna as his “spiritual son” and was the late President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission—visited Benares in January, 1921. Notes of some of his inspiring conversations held there were taken down by a monastic member in Bengali. They are presented here in translation to our readers.]

K—Maharaj, you spoke one day of the practice of Puja, meditation, continence and study of the scriptures. What does Puja mean ?

THE SWAMI—Puja means both ‘external’ and mental worship. In ‘external’ worship certain accessories such as flowers, incense etc., are necessary. It is difficult for you to get these things always. So mental worship is more convenient for you. After worshipping the Ishtam (the Chosen Ideal) mentally with Padya (water for washing the feet), flowers etc. which are offered in external worship, practise meditation and ‘mental’ Japam. In ‘mental’ Japam the Mantram (the name of the Deity) is to be repeated without moving the lips. But in ordinary Japam one has to mutter the Mantram and there is therefore the movement of the lips.

In meditation you should think of the form of your Ishtam as effulgent. Imagine that everything is shining through its lustre. Think of this effulgence as non-material and enlivened with intelligence. This kind of meditation will later on develop into the meditation of the formless and infinite aspect of God. The aspirant has to take the help of imagination in the beginning, and later on when he develops his spiritual sense he will feel the presence of the Divine. Next when he gets the highest spiritual vision he comes face to face with the Truth, as it

were. He is then transported into a different realm altogether, of which this world of matter appears to be a mere shadow, and as such something unreal. The mind is then lost in Savikalpa Samadhi (Super-conscious state with mentation). Next comes Nirvikalpa Samadhi (Super-conscious state without mentation). There is then the realisation of that which is beyond thought and speech. In that state there is nothing to be seen ; nothing to be heard. Everything is lost in the Infinite.

When one attains to this state one can bring down the mind only with great effort to the world of phenomena which appear to be unreal. It is द्वैताद्वैतविवर्जित—“beyond duality and non-duality”. Some persons attaining to this state look upon the body as an obstacle in the way of unbroken spiritual experience, and cast it off in Samadhi. It is just like the breaking down of an earthen pot.

Sri Ramakrishna used to give a beautiful illustration to explain the highest state of spiritual realisation. Suppose there are nine pots full of water, and the sun is reflected on them. You break the pots one after another until only one is left with the sun reflecting on it. Finally even this last pot you break. Then whatever is, is there. It cannot be seen or described.

K—Maharaj, some think of the Ishtam as the all-pervading Spirit. Isn't it also a form of meditation ?

THE SWAMI—Yes, quite so. Everyone has to practise this meditation but only after making some progress in spiritual life, and not in the beginning. The presence of the Ishtam is to be realised everywhere. He who is personal and with form is also impersonal and without form. He dwells in every being. He pervades land and water, hills and dales, sky and stars and everything.

K—Maharaj, the Scriptures speak of service to the Guru as a necessary means to spiritual realisation. How far is it true ?

**THE SWAMI**—It is necessary at the preliminary stage. But afterwards one's mind itself plays the part of the Guru\*.

The Guru should not be looked upon as an ordinary human being. His physical body is the temple in which resides the Lord. If the Guru is served with this idea in mind, one comes to acquire love and devotion for him, which can then be directed towards the Lord.

There are Sadhakas who meditate upon the Guru in the Sahasrara (thousand-petalled lotus in the brain), and next they merge there the form of the Guru into that of the Ishtam. Sri Ramakrishna used to say very clearly—“The Guru appears before the disciple in his spiritual vision. And then pointing out the Ishtam to him, he says, ‘Look, there is your Ishtam,’ and loses himself in it.” Really the Guru is not different from the Ishtam. There are so many things in the spiritual life. How can I tell you about all these ?

Follow the spiritual path in right earnest. When the mind becomes pure through religious practices, one can understand all the truths of the spiritual world. Remember, there is no end of them—they are countless. The spiritual aspirant keeps himself absorbed in them alone.

P—If the Sadhaka gets a little taste of Ananda (Divine bliss), he is very much encouraged to proceed on his spiritual path. Isn't it ?

**THE SWAMI**—True. But in the higher spiritual state there is neither bliss nor sorrow, pain nor pleasure, existence nor non-existence. The Ananda that you speak of is only a help during the period of Sadhana. The boat stands in need of the favourable wind so long as it has not reached its destination. But when it has once reached it, the question of wind, whether favourable or un-

\*The guidance of God—the Guru of Gurus, dwelling within—comes through one's purified mind.

favourable, does not arise at all. Ananda helps the aspirant in his onward course like the favourable wind.

Knowledge, the object known and the knower lose themselves in the Absolute---this much only have the scriptures been able to say. But what takes place after this none has the power to describe. One has to realise all that through spiritual practice.

How wonderful is the Infinite Existence---where there is neither want nor fear. The very thought of it elevates the soul. There are some spiritual men who realise the Absolute (Nitya) as distinct from the Relative (Lila---lit. Divine Sport). Others look upon both of these as one and the same. There is still another state of spiritual experience, which is beyond both the Absolute and the Relative.

## EDITORIAL NOTES

### THE GREAT HINDU REVIVAL

THE signs of a new awakening are manifest all over Asia. This spirit of renaissance has brought into being an increased communal and national consciousness in India, and is finding its expression in renewed activities in various spheres of life, political, social and religious. In the midst of this general revival, the vitality of the Hindu civilisation is also asserting itself in a number of vigorous movements aiming to reform Hindu society, and to unite and integrate its manifold parts into one organic whole. Hinduism is now putting greater stress on its eternal principles than on its customs and traditions differing widely from one another with time and circumstances. It is trying to break down the encrustation of forms and ceremonies which are threatening to kill its very soul altogether. It is further attempting to recover its wonderful power of assimilation and inclusion which enabled it to absorb most of the foreign hordes that invaded the land in olden days. In spite of some internal dissensions, a new consciousness of unity seems at present to pulsate through the entire body of the Hindu community. And all thoughtful Hindus are slowly



coming to be awakened to a sense of their duties and responsibilities towards the teeming millions—the masses, and specially those who are called the “untouchable” classes. Besides, they are also becoming alive to their kinship with those who were converted from their ancient religion. Further, they now seem to be eager to admit not only them but also others who want to come newly within the fold of the Hindu faith. In short, Hinduism is regaining its old dynamic spirit, and is busy in adapting itself to the changed environments and new needs of its innumerable votaries.

#### THE INEXHAUSTIBLE VITALITY OF THE VEDIC RELIGION

“The life of the organism,” says Herbert Spencer, “will be short or long, low or high, according to the extent to which changes in the environment are met by corresponding changes in the organism. Allowing a margin for perturbation, the life will continue only while the correspondence continues, the completeness of the life will be proportional to the completeness of the correspondence, and the life will be perfect only when the correspondence is perfect.” In following this great principle of biology lies the secret of the eternal life of the Sanatana Dharma of India. The ancient civilisations of Egypt and Babylon, Greece and Rome lacked this power of adaptation in spite of their greatness. This is why they have been swept away from the face of the earth or absorbed by alien cultures. But the Hindu civilisation still lives unvanquished. Foreign conquerors spared no pains to blot it out of existence. But such was its inexhaustible vitality that it could not only stem the tide of alien civilisations but also conquer most of its political conquerors by the mighty power of its spiritual culture. This phenomenon repeated itself many a time in India’s past history, and is also going to repeat itself in modern times. Nay, Hinduism is giving unmistakable proofs of a renaissance which bids fair to throw all similar movements of the past completely into the back-ground. But unfortunately the new spirit has as yet inspired only a section, and not the main bulk of the followers of the Hindu religion.

#### DYNAMIC LIFE—A NECESSITY

Great obstacles stand in the way of the Hindu revival. And the most formidable of these is the tendency of the vast majority of the Hindus to keep themselves drowned in the ocean of Tamas, and this in the name of

**Sattva.** In most men gross ignorance and morbid inactivity are coupled with deplorable weakness and inordinate pride in the ancient glory of the race. And ignorance is passing for knowledge, passivity for renunciation, cowardice for non-injury, impotence for forgiveness, and manifold evil actions as practices of religion. The spirit of freedom, the sense of self-respect, the power of self-help, the strength of will, the tenacity of purpose, and above all the passionate yearning for a new order—all these are yet to be born in the hearts of many. The entire Hindu community should feel the impulse of the coming renaissance, and shake off "the mean faint-heartedness" which has overtaken its soul. We Hindus have now to fight the battle of life boldly. We must rise from our slumber and call up the dormant potentialities of the Hindu race. We want intense life and activity. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, "we want energy, love of independence, spirit of self-reliance, immovable fortitude, dexterity in action, bond of unity of purpose and thirst for improvement. Checking a little the constant looking back to the past, we want the expansive vision infinitely projected forward; we want that intense spirit of activity which will flow through our every vein, from head to foot." Tamas is to be overcome by Rajas, inertia by activity. Then alone will come Sattva with its purity, knowledge and equanimity, and not otherwise.

#### AGGRESSIVE HINDUISM

The hope of the Hindu community lies, as Swami Vivekananda very strongly held, in making Hinduism aggressive. The Eternal Religion of India must inspire its votaries to follow the highest ideals of life, and apply these ideals boldly to the numerous problems facing the Indian people in general and the Hindu community in particular. It must defend itself from the onslaughts of foreign cultures, assimilate what is best in them, and enrich them in turn by its own contributions. It must open its old hospitable doors to all, irrespective of race and nationality, as in the days long gone by. What Swami Vivekananda actually meant by aggressive Hinduism Sister Nivedita clearly states in her 'The Master as I saw Him'— "The Eternal Faith must become active and proselytising, capable of sending out special missions, of making converts, of taking back into her fold those of her own children who had been perverted from her, and of the conscious and deliberate

assimilation of new elements." This aggressive spirit does not mean any interference with other peoples' rights. It has nothing to do with bloody persecutions, forcible conversions and extermination of "heretics." Such actions have been against the very spirit of the Hindu religion. Aggressive Hinduism implies activity in place of passivity, strength in place of weakness, dynamic transformation in place of static conservatism, conquest of the world by religion and spirituality in place of domination by bigotry and sectarian spirit. But without the organised efforts of its innumerable members Hinduism can never become dynamic. The problem of all problems therefore now is—how to bring about the solidarity of the diverse sections that form the mighty body of the Hindu community.

#### COMMON BASES OF HINDUISM

Hindu society is a vast ethnological museum consisting of peoples differing widely from one another in race, colour, language, traditions, manners and customs. But at the back of this baffling variety there lies a fundamental unity which superficial observers fail to notice. Those who are able to come in close touch with the deep life-current of the Indian people are bound to agree with Sir Herbert Risley when he says—"Beneath the manifold diversity of physical and social type, language, custom and religion, which strikes the observer in India there can still be discerned a certain underlying uniformity of life from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin." This uniformity is manifest in the case of the Hindus in a very pronounced manner. Besides, India is regarded by the Hindus not only as their beloved motherland and the glorious land of their forefathers, but also as the *Punyabhumi* or the blessed land of their religion and spiritual traditions. The Mussalman looks up for inspiration to Arabia—the country associated with the life and activities of his Prophet. The Christian cherishes great love for Palestine—the holy land where the founder of his religion was born. But in the words of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, the Hindu thinks of India "not only as a political unit, but as the outward embodiment, as the temple—nay even as the goddess mother—of his spiritual culture. India and Hinduism are organically related as body and soul." India encircled by snow-capped mountains and mighty seas and containing innumerable races and tribes, forests and deserts, fauna and flora is simply grand as a geo-

graphical unit. But grander still is India as a cultural unit,—as the great stage of Divine Leela, as the birth-place of saints and sages, as the treasure-house of religion and philosophy. It is the recognition of the motherland as Punyabhumi that makes the patriotic Hindu devotee declare जननी जन्मभूमिश्च स्वर्गादपि गरीयसी "Mother and motherland are higher than heaven itself."

#### UNITY OF HINDU INDIA

In his admirable little book—"The Fundamental Unity of India", Dr. Radhakumud Mookerjee clearly points out that the early fathers of the Hindu civilisation fully recognised the geographical unity of their vast motherland which first consisted of Aryavarta—the territory between the Himalayas and the Vindhya, and later on included also the Dakshinapatha or Southern India where the Aryan culture gradually spread along with the extension of Aryan colonisation. The ancients called the whole country Bharatavarsha after the great King Bharata who by his conquest of new territories carried the Indian civilisation beyond its original bounds at the very dawn of India's history. "Bharata was held up," observes Dr. Mookerjee, "as a convenient symbol, a comprehensive token of this early renaissance, of the conquest of a new thought and a new faith finding expression through their appropriate literature, discipline and institutions, social, economic and political, of the accomplishment of a new cultural unity imposed upon and pervading a rich, manifold variety, round which were gathered, as in a system of federation, different creeds, cults and cultures with liberty to each to preserve its own special features and genius and contribute its own quota to enrich the central culture." Etymologically the word 'India' has only a geographical significance, it being the name of the country beyond the mighty river Sindhu which was called 'Hindu' by the Persians and 'Indos' by the Greeks, while the name 'Bharatavarsha' implies not only a geographical, but also a political and cultural unity. This conception of Indian unity is older than any foreign rule, ancient or modern. The founders of the ancient Indian civilisation combined their deep religious instinct with their passionate love for the country. They thus sublimated patriotism into religion, and realised in the motherland a living Deity to be worshipped with love and devotion.

#### THE BOND OF COMMON CULTURE

To the Hindu the whole country with its innumerable Tirthas—holy rivers, mountains, cities and other places of worship—

is indeed a vast temple. The great institution of pilgrimage has tended to keep up very vividly this consciousness of unity in the minds of the Hindus. It has, besides, enabled them to feel the solidarity of the Hindu race. What this really means can be understood by visiting any important place of pilgrimage. Men, women and children coming from the farthest corners of the country meet one another and worship the same God in a remarkable spirit of harmony and good-will. They may speak different tongues unintelligible to one another. But they have, as Sir Monier Williams noted, "only one sacred language and only one sacred literature accepted and revered by all adherents of Hinduism alike, however diverse in race, dialect, rank and creed." Indeed Sanskrit language and Sanskrit literature—the repository of the religion, philosophy and traditions of the Hindu race—combine the manifold elements into a homogeneous whole. Besides, the doctrine of the immortality of the Soul, the laws of Karma and reincarnation, the theory of the eternity of creation, the ideal of the emancipation of the soul—all these common beliefs tend to strengthen the consciousness of unity. There is no doubt that a common spiritual heritage unites the north and south, east and west of India into an indivisible cultural whole.

#### UNION OF THE HINDUS

In spite of their heterogeneous sectarian and racial composition, and diversity of sect, language, dress, manners and customs, the Hindus profess the same Eternal religion of India, and are spiritually and intellectually one people. In studying the innumerable indigenous faiths we are bound to acknowledge with Swami Vivekananda that "from the high spiritual flights of the Vedanta Philosophy, of which the latest discoveries of science seem like echoes, to the lowest ideas of idolatry with its multifarious mythology, the agnosticism of the Buddhists, and the atheism of the Jains, each and all, have a place in the Hindu religion." And the religious communities that have sprung up on the soil of India,—the Sanatanists, the Jains, the Buddhists, the Sikhs, the Brahmos, the Arya Samajists and others—are knit together by common spiritual affinities which must be strengthened to-day for the realisation of Indian unity. Our kinsmen from ancient Iran—the Parsis—have also much in common with us Hindus in the essentials of their faith. By divine dispensation they have come to settle in the country south of the Sindhu, and have therefore become

**'Hindus.'** Long stay in India for about thirteen centuries has made them imbibe to some extent the Hindu culture and has greatly made up the differences which made their ancestors separate themselves from the founders of the Vedic religion during the early days of the history of the world. These two branches of the great Aryan family must now unite in closer bonds of harmony and fellowship for the well-being of their common motherland.

#### HINDU SOLIDARITY—A CONDITION OF NATIONAL UNION

The new awakening of Hinduism should not rouse any misapprehension or suspicion in the mind of any community. What the Hindu revivalists aim at is to realise the solidarity of the various sections of the mighty Hindu society, and to try to bring about at the same time the unity of all the communities who have settled on the soil of India. This union, to be worth its name, must be a stable one and not a dangerous combination of incompatible elements ever ready to explode at the slightest touch or friction. True union can take place only between parties equally strong. But the Hindu is weak and disorganised. He has lost the strength to protect even his hearth and home, defend the glory of his religion, save the honour of his womenfolk from the attacks of ruffians and fanatics. The mild Hindu must now be strong and organised. Keeping intact the high spiritual idealism of his religion, he must now develop a strong body, a fearless mind, an iron will and an unyielding valour. He must draw his inspiration from the gospel of strength as preached by his religion, awaken his potential divinity and express the infinite power that is locked up in his soul.

#### SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S MESSAGE OF STRENGTH

Appalling physical weakness is one of the main causes of the manifold ills the Hindu is suffering from to-day. This physical degeneration is partly responsible for his mental weakness and loss of faith in himself. It has brought untold miseries on his community and may even threaten its very existence unless it is checked in time. Swami Vivekananda fully realised the gravity of the situation, and suggested also the proper remedy when he boldly declared—"Our young men must be strong first of all. Religion will come afterwards. Be strong, my young friends, that is my advice to you. You

will be nearer to heaven through football than through the study of the Gita. You will understand the Gita better with your biceps, your muscles a little stronger." Indeed the great message which Sri Krishna delivered in the Gita can be properly appreciated only by a heroic person of Arjuna's stamp. The immortal glory of the Atman—"the shore free from fear," proclaimed by the seers of the Upanishads—can be clearly understood only by an intrepid soul like Nachiketas, who can boldly meet death face to face. Self-realisation, individual or collective, can never be attained by the weak and the imbecile. The hope of the Hindu's regeneration lies in his upholding the glory of the eternal, deathless Atman—the repository of all power and knowledge. Faith in the infinite potentiality of the soul is sure to bring strength to his weak body and knowledge to his hypnotised mind. It is this great message of strength and hope that Swami Vivekananda proclaimed again and again with all the emphasis at his command when he declared— "None is really weak, the soul is infinite, omnipresent and omniscient. Stand up, assert yourself, proclaim the God within you, do not deny Him! Too much of inactivity, too much of weakness, too much of hypnotism has been and is upon our race. O ye modern Hindu, dehypnotise yourselves. The way to do that is found in your sacred books. Teach every one his real nature, call up the sleeping soul to see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything that is excellent will come when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity."

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## CONCEPTS OF GOD—EASTERN AND WESTERN

*By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B. A., B. L.*

**M**ODERN philosophic thought of the higher type has realised and proclaimed the truth God's existence despite scientific agnosticism and philistine materialism. Science has lifted the veil of ignorance and shown the activity of change during a period of the known evolution between two realms of darkness—the unknown darkness of the past and the unknown darkness of the future. Philosophy has however realised even in modern times that the first cause of every change in the world is the original and creative thought of God.

Fichte says that God is just, holy, blessed and all-powerful. God is equally the witness and the knower of physical effects and moral decisions. Hence He is omniscient. "Eternity is required for God to establish the balance between morality and happiness ; therefore God must be eternal." Religion is founded on the idea of God as the determiner of nature to moral ends. God may reveal Himself within and without us. "Indeed the entire system of phenomena *may* appear as a revelation, and further, when a man or humanity has sunk so low that the moral laws given by pure reason have lost their power, a particular fact in the world of sense may give sanction to the moral law. The pure moral impulse may be specially revealed to man, when he has sunk into a degenerate state, through the medium of sense-phenomena. There may be cases where a revelation is necessary to *produce* moral feeling in a race." In this view we see a groping towards that combination of Eternal Revelation and Occasional Incarnation which Hindu thought alone has realised and formulated in clear and convincing terms. Fichte says that "God may transcend the sense-world but not the moral world." Here also we find a bewildered half-way stopping in the ascending path of speculation. Hindu thought alone has gone up the whole road and reached the central core of Ananda where the lines of moral as well as of physical evolution have come. Fichte says that the primal fact in being is Action. Vedanta says that it is *Ananda*. The identity of self-consciousness is no doubt the primary fact. But its *nature* is *Sachchidananda*. Fichte says that the finite I is a form of the manifestation of the free activity of the Eternal Reason. Mr. Leighton says about Fichte's conception of God : "The absolute I is the *impersonal and universal Intelligence* which is immanent in and gives reality to the entire activity of the finite I's in all their relations active and passive. . . . It is the only reality, for the sense-world has no reality in itself. . . . The idea of the absolute I is, when viewed from the practical standpoint, the idea of God. The pure I is posited outside ourselves and called God." Fichte says that from the transcendental point of view there is no self-existent world, and that what we see is only the re-appearance of our own inner activity. It is however difficult to comprehend him when he says that God is an order of events and not a substance. He says that God is not dead Being but rather pure action, the life and principle of the super-sensuous World-Order. Duty cannot be done



without reference to an end, but the end would be blessedness and not enjoyment. He says that God exists in the immediacy of our felt life and that philosophy has to do only with a concept of the *idea* of God. The weakness in all this is an artificial divorce between the God of Religion and the God of Philosophy. Fichte was accused of atheism and pantheism. But he stated clearly that God exists and manifests Himself but He is not exhausted in His manifestations, and that the true destiny of humanity is to return to God. He realised the immanency of the Divine Life in the ethical striving of humanity and brought about a new union of the moral life and the mystic life.

Hegel says that God is the Eternal Prius that eternally manifests itself. He says : "The Good, the absolutely Good, is eternally accomplishing itself in the world." He uses the phrase "the Absolute Idea" to represent both our thought and the object of that thought. It is the ultimate existence and is really the divine self-consciousness. It is not *abstract* thought but the most concrete reality. He says : "Philosophy has the end to know the truth, to know God, for He is absolute Truth, and in contrast to God and His explanation, nothing else is worth the trouble of knowing." God is a circle that returns upon itself, not a straight line projected indefinitely. He is all-pervasive and omnipresent. It is the nature of God to manifest Himself. He is the beginning and the end of the World-Process. The world is His self-determined self-limitation. It is, however, impossible to follow Hegel when he says that God negates Himself in order that there may be a world. Equally vitiated by a subtle fallacy is his statement that "the Spirit which disperses itself into finite flashes of light in the individual consciousness must again gather itself together out of this finitude." The fact is that everything is God though owing to dateless *Karma* causing the diverse refractions of the mind and the senses we have a perception of finiteness and diversity. What is eternal and infinite Bliss is or seems to be all this cosmic diversity. We need not go here into the vexed question of *Vivarta* or *Parinama*. There is no self-negation of God or a final summation of fractions. The Absolute is the synthesis of God and Man and Nature. From Eternal and Infinite Freedom and Bliss comes this triplicity, the glory of each depending on the fineness of the medium of manifestation. It seems to me that the Absolute limited by an infinite mind in an infinite frame—which

however may be self-limited into a finite frame out of grace for purposes of worship—is God. The Absolute limited by a finite mind and a finite frame is the embodied soul. The Absolute limited by matter of three different degrees of fineness is the cosmos. But the Absolute is the Prius of the Love and Bliss of God, of the mind of the embodied soul, and of the cosmic frame. This view is the matrix of the Vedantic conception, letting alone for the present the diversities of thought of the Vedantic sects. Hegel says that God projects the cosmos out of Himself to realise Himself through the negation of Himself. He says that this does not mar His perfection. He says that History is the theatre of the unceasing strife and reconciliation of the Absolute Spirit and the final individual. The former continually overrules the purposes of men in order that they may realize their true destiny which is freedom. God is immanent in the world and directs the world's movement towards the development of Freedom.

Schleiermacher regards the God-consciousness as immediate. He says : " True Science is a perfect intuition. True conduct is self-produced culture and art. *True religion is sense and taste for the Infinite.*" The organ of religious realisation is feeling by which the subject and the object become one and wherein God-consciousness and true self-consciousness attain identity. His feeling seems to be similar to the Vedantic *Sakshatkara*, i. e., immediate and intuitive self-consciousness. God, he says, is Divine causality which is different from the causality of nature. The latter occurs in time, the former is eternal. He is hence omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience. In God Thought and Will are identical. He says that the Divine fore-knowledge does not destroy human freedom, since the latter is the expression of the nature of the Self, and not a power of acting arbitrarily. Thus his view of the immediacy and uniqueness of the religious life in man and of the immediate self-consciousness of unity as the source of religion is valuable.

Mr. Herbert Spencer's theory of the Unknowable is not a valuable or true idea. If the mystery of the universe is " an absolute mystery " and if the power " which the universe manifests " is not only unknown but also unknowable, then religion is exhausted of all its spiritual content. He calls the Unknowable as " an Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed ". He says : " The Power manifested throughout the universe distinguished as material, is the same

Power which in ourselves wells up under the form of consciousness." He says again : " The consciousness of self and the consciousness of non-self are the elements of an unceasing rhythm in consciousness." This attempt to explain mind in terms of matter and both in terms of some Unknowable Energy which is the matrix of both is futile and empty agnosticism. How does the mind know matter? Why may not this be because matter is a derivative of mind? If the mind in a certain state of purity can realise God, how can God be said to be Unknowable, a mere postulate? Spencer slays God by calling Him the Unknowable and then drags the corpse into our vision and glorifies it as the Persistence of Force! Persistence of Force! Nay, it is the Persistence and Absoluteness of Bliss. Spencer gives us a mere phantom of scientific logic and not the Eternal Fulness and Perfection about which a well-known Sanskrit stanza says :

पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते ।

पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

The fact is that " consciousness is a name for the self-revealing light of experience ". The perception of the unity of God, man and universe is a fact of intuition. The multiplicity of form is in the light of a truer vision realised as a unity. Directness and immediacy of vision and intuition is an experience and cannot be described or proved in terms of mind which is an instrument of diversity—a prison breaking the white light of the One into the coloured rays of the Many. The *organon* of religious experience is based on a correct epistemology or theory of knowledge. The ultimate analysis leads us to Self-realisation as a Single Consciousness in which there is no dichotomy of Subject and Object but Pure Sachchidananda. The relation of God and Man must be that of an Eternal Blissful Spiritual King to a realm of eternal blissful spirits, or a relation of the All-embracing Self-consciousness unifying and sustaining the whole world of spirits as His cosmic frame or the Eternal Blissful Absolute above all dichotomy of Name and Form. Thus the ultimate metaphysical analysis must lead us to Dwaita of one sort or another, Visishtadwaita of one sort or another, and Adwaita of one sort or another. But are these mutually exclusive and irreconcilable? Or are they themselves a gradation of intuitive self-realisation of Bliss?

The sense of the Infinite is always with us and is the unconscious standard we have in view when we speak of finite things. The senses and the mind stop with different degrees of finiteness of realisation but always give us a hint of the Infinite. The path of *Jnana* enables us to realise the Infinite. Realising the Infinite means being one with the Infinite in the Superconscious state.

What is the meaning and implication of *Infinite*? The Infinite is that which is above time, space and causation. It is one, because if the infinite is not one, it is finite. If there is another, it is limited by that other and would be subject to time, space and causation. So matter is not separate from, or outside, God. He is not separate from, or outside of, our soul. God is, therefore, Infinite and One. He is Eternal, Self-luminous, the basis and foundation of everything, the Absolute. In relation to creation the Absolute is called God. Creation is only the self-projected being of God, not an emanation from nothing. It is a manifestation of His cosmic energy or *Maya*. He is the material and efficient cause of the universe. He is Immanent (*Antaryamin*) and Transcendent (*Vibhu*). He is the repository of all auspicious and blissful attributes ( अनन्तब्रह्माण्डगुणनिधिः ). The love of the soul compels the revelation of the Infinite in a finite spiritual form. He appears as *Iswara* or *Devi* according to the nature of our longing. *Iswari* is both *Vidya Sakthi* and *Avidya Sakthi*. The former leads us unto Truth (*Satya*) the latter drives us into the world of desire or *Samsara*.

I have thus sought above to state some of the western and eastern philosophic concepts of God. God in terms of simple faith and feeling is all that most men know or care to know. But the conceptual mind is the deepest fact of our being and will, and it must be satisfied. An idea of God which faith affirms but reason rejects, or which reason affirms but intuition or superconscious experience negates cannot be a glorious inner force for a long time. It is the Hindu idea of God that is full and perfect and appeals equally and simultaneously to morality, faith, feeling, reason, and intuition or mystic and superconscious experience.

## THE UTILITY OF RELIGION\*

*By Swami Yatiswarananda*

**R**ELIGION has been the key-note of the music of Indian life. It has been the central theme of the life of our great ancestors—the Rishis, the seers of Truth. And now standing on the sacred soil of India, the land of religion, we, the children of the Rishis, question the very utility of religion and ask “How are we going to be benefited by it?”

All this indicates that we are now passing through a period of utter degeneration. We claim to be the followers of the Varnashrama Dharma. Dharma is that which supports, sustains life. But then, why is it that we are now in a most helpless state? The reason is that we do not care for the ideals of Dharma. Neither do we care for the ideals of Varna. Where is the Brahmana whose chief traits, as the Gita declares, should be control of mind and senses, austerity, purity, forbearance, uprightness and knowledge? Where again is the Kshatriya—the protector of society, who is endowed with prowess, boldness, fortitude and generosity? Where is the Vaishya—the accumulator and distributor of the national wealth? Where again is the Sudra who, by following the path of service allotted to him, can attain to the highest perfection? The ideal Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya or Sudra is rarely to be found in our modern days.

The different Ashramas also have practically ceased to exist. The life of a student does no longer imply moral and spiritual discipline that is to be practised along with study. The Hindu household has stopped being an Ashrama—a place for the practice of self-control and fulfilment of the duties of life. The life of the Vanaprasthin—the hermit—has become a thing of the past. Sannyasa—the life of renunciation and service—the crowning glory of the Hindu's existence—is dreaded and avoided by almost everybody. The original Varnashrama Dharma exists nowhere. What remains is only a travesty of the grand socio-religious system built up by the ancient sages of India on the eternal ideals of the Vedic religion.

\*Notes of an address given at the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Mylapore, Madras.

We have degenerated. That is why we idolise sense-life and think of the practices of religion as unnecessary. We speak of God but behave in a way which shows as if no God exists. We talk about the Atman, but act in a manner which indicates that we look upon the body as our Self. Like the Charvakas of old we follow the doctrine यात्रज्जीवेत् सुखं जीवेत् ऋणं कृत्वा कृतं पिबेत् "Eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die." Asked by Napoleon the Great about the place of God in his system, the great astronomer Laplace replied—"Sire, I have done without that hypothesis." Most of us too have done away with the hypothesis of God and soul. This is the great tragedy of our modern life. Religion has little influence on our thoughts and activities.

Does the fault lie with religion? No. It is the neglect of religious practice that is responsible for our pitiable state. The root-cause of our misery lies not in the want of knowledge, but in the want of practice as the King Duryodhana once said—

जानामि धर्मं न च मे प्रवृत्तिः जानाम्यधर्मं न च मे निवृत्तिः

"I know what the Dharma is, but I have no inclination to practise it. I know also what Adharma is, but I cannot desist from it." It is the neglect of Dharma that has brought about our downfall. And the sincere pursuit of Dharma can again elevate us. Now in order to follow the path of Dharma, we should first of all know what it means. We should also be fully convinced of its utility—how it is going to benefit us both materially and spiritually, individually and collectively.

धारणात् धर्ममित्याहुः धर्मो धारयते प्रजाः

"Dharma comes from a root which means 'to support.' Dharma is that which sustains or protects mankind."

The Aryan conception of Dharma is a very comprehensive one. Dharma is for all, for people of all stages of life and evolution. Dharma does not speak to us only of the other world. Declares the sage Kanada— यतोऽभ्युदयनिःश्रेयससिद्धिः स धर्मः —"Dharma is the means to material prosperity as well as to spiritual well-being." The Sutra has been interpreted differently by different commentators. But whatever it is, Dharma has a larger and more complex significance than the word 'religion' in English. According to the Hindu sages, Dharma includes both the Pravritti Dharma or the path of legitimate worldly achievement and enjoyment, and also the Nivritti Dharma—the path of renun-

ciation and divine realisation. The first, if properly regulated, culminates in the second and brings about the emancipation of the soul from the bondage of matter and worldly desires.

Like Dharma, the Hindu conception of Vidya or Knowledge too is all-embracing. Aparā Vidya or the "lower knowledge" implies, as the Upanishad declares, the study not only of the four Vedas but also of phonetics, ceremonial, grammar, etymology, metre, and astronomy. Parā Vidya is the "higher knowledge" by which the Indescribable Brahman is realised. Direct realisation of the Truth precedes theoretical knowledge which need not necessarily imply the study of religious books alone. Any branch of learning which developed the mental powers of man and enabled him to understand himself and the things around him were valued by the ancients and formed part of the curriculum of their times. The Chhandogya Upanishad enumerates the various branches of "lower knowledge" studied by the sage Narada. These include, besides the four Vedas, history and tradition, grammar, the rites of the manes, mathematics, the science of portents, the science of time, logic, ethics, politics, etymology, ceremonials, prosody, the science of the elementals, the science of war, astronomy, the science of snake-charming and the fine arts. This "lower knowledge" found its fulfilment in the higher knowledge of Brahman—the Truth of all truths, the very Essence of things. And the pursuit of both the Aparā and Parā Vidyas formed part of the Dharma of the "twice born", particularly of the Brahmacharins—the students of ancient times.

The great teachers of the Hindu religion took into consideration the all-round development of man. They declared

शरीरमाद्यं खलु धर्मसाधनम्

—"A healthy body is the first essential for the practice of Dharma." In the peace invocation the student of the Upanishads has to repeat—

ओं आप्यायन्तु ममाङ्गानि वाक्प्राणश्चक्षुः श्रोत्रमथो बलमिन्द्रियाणि च सर्वाणि

"Om! May my limbs, speech, energy, vitality, eyes ears and other senses become vigorous."

ओं भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवाः भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः ।

स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवांसस्तनूभिः व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः ॥

"Om! O Gods! May we hear with our ears what is auspicious! O ye worshipful ones! May we see with our eyes what is auspicious! May we, who sing praise (to ye), enjoy the life allotted to us by the Gods with strong limbs and body!"

Dharma is to concern itself not only with man's physical well-being but more than that with his spiritual welfare as well.

How does religion promote our individual spiritual well-being? Religion gives us what nothing else can. It is the greatest source of peace and blessedness in a world in which we are constantly buffeted by troubles and tribulations, worried by cares and anxieties and threatened by the harrowing sights of old age, sickness and death. We turn to it and to the God it preaches, not out of our goodness but out of dire necessity, as is generally the case. "But man's necessity is God's opportunity." God—the Soul of our soul—is anxious to reveal Himself to us though He rarely finds the opportunity to do so. But He finds it when we take shelter unto Him after trying in vain all human means.

As Sri Krishna says in the Gita—

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जना मुहूर्तानिऽर्जुन ।

आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥

"Four kinds of virtuous men worship Me, O Arjuna—the distressed, the seeker for knowledge, the seeker for enjoyment, and the wise." The Jnani—the man of knowledge—sees God everywhere. It is but natural for him to worship God. And his love and devotion flow out of the fulness of his heart. But such is not the case with the others. Misery in some form or other goads them on to God. It may be worldly suffering, or it may be the misery caused by ignorance or want of objects of enjoyment. Or it may be the great agony which spiritual hunger brings to the human soul,—a hunger which nothing that is worldly can appease. It is God-vision alone that can put an end to it. And only those persons can appreciate the utility of religion, who are made restless by this soul-hunger, who feel the misery of existence, and yearn for a peace which they seek in vain in this world of change.

Such an intense spiritual passion moved the very being of Swami Vivekananda. The desire to see God and know the ultimate Truth seized his soul. He wanted to meet a religious teacher who had realised God and could tell him about God. He saw many a religious preacher of the day but none could claim to have realised God. None dared to tell him that they had seen God. At last he came to Sri Ramakrishna, and asked him—"Sir, have you seen God?" "Yes," said the Master, "I see Him just as I see you here, only in a much intenser



sense." Swami Vivekananda now found a man to whom religion was a reality, who had himself realised God and could show him the way to God. This was the great turning point in the Swami's life. He found in the words of his master a solace, a hope—which religion and religious men alone can give to the distressed soul. This is the greatest utility of religion in our individual life.

What is the contribution of religion to our collective life? How is it going to help us in bringing about the unity of our manifold castes and creeds? We must bear in mind that the religion which Hinduism preaches is not individualistic and one-sided. It always fosters the sense of unity. The holy text which every devout Hindu is expected to repeat during his bath and worship is meant for developing the feeling—

गङ्गे च यमुने चैव गोदावरी सस्नति ।

नर्मदं सिन्धुकावेरी जलेऽस्मिन् सन्निधिं कुरु ॥

"O ye Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu and Cauvery, come ye and enter into this water of my offering."

The above Mantram calls up the picture of Mother India with all her holy rivers flowing towards the mighty ocean,—the Mother who nourishes all her children irrespective of the provinces and denominations to which they may belong. Again, when the Hindu remembers the names of the seven sacred places hallowed by many a spiritual association,—Ayodhya, Mathura, Maya (Hardwar), Kasi (Benares), Kanchi (Conjeeveram), Avanti (Ujjain) and Dwaravati (Dwaraka)—he rises above all provincial narrowness and realises his unity with those who people this holy land. This sense of solidarity is considerably developed through invocations and prayers—

स्वस्ति प्रजाभ्यः परिपालयन्तां न्यायेन मार्गेण महीं महीशाः ।

गोब्राह्मणेभ्यः शुभमस्तु नित्यं लोकास्समस्ताः सुखिनो भवन्तु ॥

"May good betide all people! May all sovereigns rule the earth in the righteous paths! May prosperity ever reign over the land for the benefit of all creatures! May all prosper in peace and plenty!"

What religion can do in strengthening the bond of unity may be realised at our holy places like Benares and Rameswaram, or on the banks of the sacred streams like Ganga and Yamuna. Herein lies the utility of religion in our collective

life. But the greatest value of religion we can realise in the lives of our God-men, our saints and sages who are engaged in the good of all beings. True religion is to be learned at the feet of these noble souls who as Sri Sankaracharya says—

तीर्णाः स्वयं भीमभवार्षिणं जनानहेतुनान्यान्पि तारयन्तः ।

“ Having themselves crossed the dreadful ocean of existence, help others also to cross the same without any selfish motive whatsoever.”

## SYNTHESIS OF YOGA IN THE GITA

*By Swami Vedantananda*

**W**E work, but do not know its secret. We try to control the mind, but possess no knowledge of the laws of thought. We pray and worship, but do not have any clear conception of God. We reason and philosophise, but lack any definite idea of the Reality. This is the great tragedy of our life. “ What is done with knowledge is more fruitful than what is done without it ” says the Upanishad. To make our labours successful we must work with intelligence and knowledge. We should get a clear understanding of the goal and adopt at the same time the proper means of its realisation. In short, we must know the paths of Yoga and be Yogis ourselves, as the Lord says in the Bhagavadgita.

The Gita is a veritable compendium of the whole Hindu scriptures, and speaks to us of the different paths of Yoga. Yoga means the dissociation of the soul from things material, and its consequent union with the Divine, the Higher Self, the Infinite Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. It also means the paths leading to this spiritual realisation. The goal is the same for all the paths as Sri Krishna clearly declares—

“By performing action (Karma) without attachment one attains to the Highest. The (Raja) Yogi of subdued mind attains the peace residing in Me,—the peace which culminates in Nirvana. The Supreme Being is attainable by whole-souled devotion (Bhakti) to Him alone. Having attained knowledge one (the Jnani) goes at once to the Supreme Peace.”

The Gita not only places before mankind the highest goal but also shows the various methods of spiritual practice suited to our temperaments and tendencies. Of these the principal ones are Karma Yoga, Raja Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Jnana

**Yoga.** The tendencies to perform Karma is innate in man, and none can remain without action. Thus in the case of persons of active temperament what is required is not the cessation but the proper controlling and directing of activity. Work with attachment binds the soul. But selfless work performed in a spirit of worship becomes a means of attaining to freedom. "He who does actions forsaking attachment, resigning them to Brahman, is not soiled by evil, like unto a lotus-leaf by water. . . . Even doing action always, taking refuge in Me—by My grace he attains to the eternal, immutable State"—So says Sri Krishna in the Gita.

The man of a contemplative bent of mind, endowed with a tremendous will-power, wants to control his whole nature, both external and internal. But spasmodic attempts at concentration will lead only to failure and mental depression. The restless mind is to be brought under control slowly and steadily "through practice and renunciation." This the Lord definitely points out in his Song Celestial—"With the intellect set in practice, with the mind fixed on the Self, let him (the Yogi) attain quietude by degrees. Through whatever reason the restless, unsteady mind wanders away, let him, curbing it from that, bring it under the subjugation of the Self alone." This is the path by which the Raja Yogi, with his passions quieted down, attains to the infinite bliss of Brahman.

The devotee hankers after union with his Beloved with all his heart. Worldly love is not able to appease the hunger of his soul. His whole mind flows as it were in a continuous current towards the Lord who is of the "nature of Love unspeakable." His God is not a Being dwelling somewhere in a far-off heaven, but is seated in his very heart. The devotee has only to look within and see the beautiful face of his Beloved—the Soul of his soul. "The Lord," says Sri Krishna, "dwells in the hearts of all beings, causing all beings, by His Maya to revolve (as if) mounted on a machine. Take refuge in Him with all thy heart; by His grace shalt thou attain supreme peace and eternal abode."

The Jnani or the person of a philosophic turn of mind is not satisfied with the little things of the world. He is anxious to know the reality at the back of the phenomenal world. He does not possess any great attraction even for the personal aspect of the Divinity. He hankers to attain to the Universal—his true Self. According to the Gita, "This Self is never born, nor does it die. This is unborn, eternal, changeless, ever itself. It is not killed when the body is killed. Those

who have their intellect absorbed in That, whose Self is That, whose steadfastness is in That, whose consummation is That, their impurities cleansed by knowledge, they attain Non-return or Moksha."

All spiritual paths can be classed under the four *Yogas* mentioned above. In our study of religious psychology in general and of the *Bhagavadgita* in particular we find that these *Yogas* are not like water-tight compartments. They are on the other hand interdependent. The name Karma Yoga, Raja-Yoga, Bhakti Yoga or Jnana Yoga is given according to the predominating feature of the path. The Karma Yogi possesses concentration, devotion and knowledge along with non-attachment. The Raja-Yogi may not give expression to any feelings of Bhakti, but he too must have—in varying degrees it may be—all the indispensable elements of spiritual life. And so also the Bhakta and Jnani. Indeed it is practically an impossible task to put a dividing line between the different types. "Evenness of mind is known as Yoga"—says the Lord in the *Gita*. This evenness must be possessed by all Yogis alike. "One with true insight into the domain of Guna and Karma, knowing that the Gunas as senses merely rest on the Gunas as objects, does not become attached. . . . The knower of Truth being centred in the Self should think, "I do nothing at all," convinced that it is the senses that move among sense-objects. He who worships Me dwelling in all beings, being established in Unity, whatever be his mode of life, that Yogi abides in Me. He who is friendly and compassionate towards all, who is free from the feelings of "I and mine," ever content and steady in meditation, with mind and intellect fixed on Me, is dear to Me." All these words of Sri Krishna are more or less applicable to all types of Yogis. There is thus a conscious or unconscious synthesis of all noble attributes in the lives of all really spiritual men.

The reason of this combination is not far to seek. Human mind is a synthetic whole possessing the faculties of will, feeling and knowledge. Karma Yoga and Raja Yoga both depend more on the faculty of will than on the others, although the former path is more objective and the latter more subjective. Bhakti is the expression more of feeling than of the other faculties. Jnana lays greater stress on knowledge than on all the other elements. But the faculties are inseparable as the *Yogas*, they all fulfilling one another.

Such being the case, is it not desirable to put equal stress on all the four paths of Yoga and develop the faculties of the mind to an equal extent? Indeed if this can be done, it will mean an all-round spiritual growth. In the world of religion one-sided developments have their dangers. Karma sometimes becomes aimless and leads to the restlessness of the soul. Yoga at times degenerates into physical mortification and pursuit of psychic powers. Bhakti may deteriorate into meaningless sentimentalism. And Jnana also may lapse into dry intellectualism and morbid inactivity. Hence there lies the great necessity of combining the different paths to strengthen and support one another. Let work be combined with meditation, and knowledge be tempered with devotion. Let us try to be equally established in all the Yogas and bring about a harmonious development of all our spiritual powers. This will mean a *full* religious life which should be the ideal of religion. Says Swami Vivekananda—"Would to God that all men were so constituted that in their minds all these elements of philosophy, mysticism, emotion and work were equally present in full! That is the ideal, my ideal of a perfect man. Everyone who has only one or two of these elements of character, I consider 'one-sided'; and this world is almost full of such 'one-sided' men, with knowledge of that one road only, in which they move; and anything else is dangerous and horrible to them. To become harmoniously balanced in all these four directions, is my ideal of religion." Fully illuminated by the light of the highest knowledge, ever active in helping others without any idea of self, intoxicated by Divine Love which thinks lightly even of Mukti, perfectly established in the glory of the Self through the complete control of the senses and the mind—such is the perfect Yogi who has attained to the fullest growth of all his spiritual faculties, and who is therefore "a free man of the whole estate."

## THE STORY OF ANDAL

*By A Vaishnava Devotee*

"**F**OR the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of Dharma I come into being in every age"—so says Sri Krishna to Arjuna. According to the Vaishnava tradition, sometimes when the disturbance that prevails in the world is not so serious as to demand His

incarnation, He sends from His blissful region called 'The Highest abode' some of His devoted servants like Garuda, (the Divine Eagle) and Adishesha (the Divine Serpent) who having drunk deep of the immortal bliss of divine love shudder not at the miseries of even a thousand births in this world for His sake. Like a band of devotees suddenly entering a house, they come into the world all of a sudden with God's name on their lips, sing and dance in a state of divine ecstasy, set an example to the people of the world and after fulfilling their divine commission go back to the blissful region whence they came.

Once upon a time, with a view to carry spiritual wisdom and love to the doors of mortals groping in ignorance, Narayana, the Supreme Lord, entrusted His devotee, the Eagle, with the divine commission of establishing the grandest and simplest truths of the Upanishads and the ancient Dharma of the holy land of India, that had long ago sunk in oblivion; and he came as Perialwar and lived in Srivilliputtur, a town in South India. His whole life was one of uninterrupted and intense devotion to the Lord residing in the 'Big Temple' of Srivilliputtur, and his only joy was in serving Him in all possible ways. The quintessence of the Upanishads he immortalised in his famous work which begins with 'Pallandu' (Long live the Lord!) and which forms the very Pranava, as it were, of the Tamil Veda. He was an embodiment of the Dharma of this sacred land.

Floating on a banyan leaf in the ocean of milk called Ksheerabdhī that is far beyond the haunts of men, there was Narayana, the Supreme Being, with His eyes closed, lost in contemplation, immersed in Samadhi and insensible of the world. Along with Him there was His consort, Lakshmi, our Divine Mother, the very incarnation of mercy. With a heart bleeding with infinite pity for the countless sufferings on earth begotten of the ignorance of the one Truth, she awoke Her Lord one day from His trance divine, and referring to the good work done by His servant, Perialwar, and the secrets of emancipation that he revealed to mankind at large in his immortal Veda, begged His permission to be born in the world of mortals as his daughter for the sake of relieving the sorrows of Her children. The Lord blessed Her and said, "And be it so. Go Thou to the world of mortals on Thy mission of mercy and reach Me in the end. Let men worship My divine form, and Thine later, in all temples and thereby obtain easily all that they may desire."

Adjoining what is known as the 'Big Temple' of Srivilliputtur, there was a flower garden which was cultivated with great care and devotion by Perialwar for the purpose of decorating the Lord in the temple and worshipping Him with flowers. Morning and evening the saint would be engaged in his labour of love in the garden; he would gather the fairest flowers he could find and make a wreath of them with which he would adorn the Lord. One day in the course of his usual work in the temple garden, the saint heard a sudden noise in the ground as though the earth opened. He hastened to the spot which was a beautiful one surrounded on all sides by Tulasi plants the flowers of which were perfumed with a sweet aroma and filled the air with their fragrance. It was about noon on Friday in the month of Adi in the year of Nala, when the moon was in conjunction with the star Puram, when five planets were in the ascendant. The saint beheld in that charming and sacred spot a child of five who fell at his feet and made obeisance to him. His heart was unconsciously overflowing with love for the mysterious child, whom he gently asked, 'Who art thou?' The girl in her sweet and tender accents of love and humility declared, "Sire, I am thy daughter, thou art my father and this Tulasi plant is my mother." Remembering the birth of Sita and believing that a daughter was granted unto him by the Lord in His infinite mercy, Alwar carried her in his arms and left her in the presence of the Lord in the 'Big Temple' who bestowed on her the name Gotha and directed the saint to bring her up as his own daughter.

The young child grew up in later years into a charming girl who with a heart full of love for her father was sharing with him all his divine services in the temple and the garden. Love and devotion for the Lord began to dawn on her young heart even in her early days. Day after day she would gather the most fragrant flowers and make them into a wreath with which she would adorn her beautiful black tresses in her father's absence. She would gaze at her own reflection in a mirror and fondly ask herself whether in her beauty she would be a match for the Lord. She would then carefully remove the garlands from her hair and place them along with those that were intended for adorning the Lord without the knowledge of her father as she knew he would not consent to her polluting the sacred wreaths by this act. This she used to do every day without fail in a spirit of devotion and service.

But this did not long remain a secret. One day, in the course of his Puja, Perialwar was about to decorate the Lord of the temple with garlands. To his horror and surprise he saw a hair lying in their midst. Keen was his sorrow and bitter his disappointment. Alwar was sure that Andal alone could have been the cause of it. He called her and gently reprimanded her for making the garlands unfit for the use of the Lord. Forthwith he gathered fresh flowers and made fresh garlands with which he proceeded to adorn the Lord again but the Lord saw that an opportunity had arrived for a public demonstration of the greatness and the glory of His devotees. The Lord declined to wear the garlands and expressed his opinion to Alwar that His eager longings were only for those very garlands that had been perfumed by the fragrance of his daughter's hair. Ever after Alwar did according to the Lord's wish. At this all people were struck dumb with amazement and wondered who this Andal would be.

Years thus rolled on, and Andal came of a marriageable age and her parents and other relatives were seeking far and wide for a suitable bridegroom. But ever since she saw the light of the world, her wisdom and devotion were waxing like the moon during the bright fortnight; her mind was full of the spirit of renunciation; already her virgin heart had conceived a holy passion for the Lord which was slowly ripening to fruition. So when her parents talked to her of her marriage, Andal declared in stern and unmistakable tones, with all the strength of her conviction: "If I but hear it said that I am for a human being, I cannot bear to live." Day after day her passion for the Supreme Lord was growing like wild fire. She wished indeed that she were born earlier, for then she would have been a fortunate sharer, in company with the beautiful Gopis of Brindaban, of the intense bliss they enjoyed with Sri Krishna; but her lot was cast in a different time. Fain would she rest content with seeing at least the footprints of that sweet Lord of Brindaban, and the blessed river Jumna which formed the scene of His enjoyment with those pure damsels, and the hill of Govardhana that He playfully lifted on His fingerends. But alas! even that was far beyond her reach. And so she imagined Srivilliputtur to be Brindaban and the damsels of the city to be the shepherd maids, herself being one of them; the 'Big Temple' in the city became the palace of Nanda Gopala and the Lord in the temple stood for Sri Krishna. Like the Gopis she began her penance for the sake of



wedding the Lord and enacted in imagination all the scenes associated with them. To the silent outpourings of her heart on those occasions of divine communion she freely gave vent in the thirty songs which she has dedicated to the Lord. Just as the Lord allowed Himself to be adorned with her garlands of flowers in early days, so now he accepted with great delight her sweet offering of the garland of verses. These songs reveal her intense madness for the Lord and wonderfully inspire the heart of the readers with feelings of devotion. They breathe the immortal perfume of the subtle and glorious wisdom of the Upanishads and shower from every verse the nectar of Bhakti that knows no surfeit.

But all this deepened the sorrow of Alwar who on one occasion anxiously questioned his daughter thus: "If for a man thou art not, for whom art thou, my darling?" "From settling my marriage with anyone other than the Hari of Thirumalirumshola (a hill temple near Madura), I forbid you all"—was the reply. "Out of the Lords in the one hundred and eight holy temples of the land, whom wilt thou choose to wed?" asked Alwar respectfully. Andal said, "Let me hear then the beauties and the virtues of all the Lords and I shall answer." Alwar began to narrate all the incidents, wonders and glories connected with them all. With tears of joy in her eyes and with her hair standing on end, she listened rapt in divine ecstasy to the glowing and vivid accounts of one and all of them, but at the mention of the ravishing beauty of the sweet Lord of Sri Rangam on the Kauveri, her mind went mad after Him for ever and could not be put back on anything else.

Ever since this she lost all peace of mind. No longer could she endure the agony of separation which was growing more and more intense every moment. One night she had a blessed vision of the Lord's marriage with her which she warmly described in detail next morning to her companions. When Alwar heard of it, he clearly saw that the best bridegroom for Andal would be only the Lord of Sri Rangam, but he failed to see how the marriage could be celebrated. He grew despondent and sorrowful, and overcome by grief, one night, he fell asleep. The Lord of Sri Rangam appeared to him in a dream and bade him bring Andal to the Mantapam in front of the temple at Sri Rangam where He promised to accept her hand, and Alwar was free from all fear and anxiety. At the same time the Lord appeared in a vision before the inhabitants of His city and commanded them to go to Srivilli-

puttur and bring Andal with them to their city, whereon they made great preparations and marched to Srivilliputtur. Alwar was taken by surprise. He calmed himself and prayed to the Lord of the 'Big Temple'. In the midst of a procession attended by relatives and friends, Andal was then carried in a closed and beautifully decorated ivory palanquin with bridal music playing on all sides, away to the fair and holy city of Sri Rangam. The curtains were drawn in front of the Lord. Andal in the presence of all gently stepped forward towards Him with her entire heart lost in Him, and climbing the bed of Adishesha, reached the Lord's hallowed feet.

Alwar and his disciples stood bewildered at this sight, when the Lord exclaimed with joy, "Thou, like the Ocean of Milk, hast become Our father-in-law!" and added, "Wend thy way to Srivilliputtur and serve the blessed Lord there." Alwar returned to his place and spent the rest of his earthly career in one unbroken flow of divine service and love.

So ends the tale of our Divine Mother, Andal, which fulfils the Lord's words to Arjuna, "I am easily attainable by him, that steady-fast one, who remembers me at all times, everywhere and under all conditions, with a single mind."

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### WHAT IS PRAYER ?

In reply to a certain medical graduate Mahatma Gandhi has written an illuminating note on "What is prayer?" in a recent issue of "Young India." He observes—"Prayer means asking God for something in a reverent attitude. But the word is used also to denote any devotional act. But definition apart, what is it that millions of Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians, Jews and others do every day during the time set apart for the adoration of the Maker? It seems to me that it is a yearning of the heart to be one with the Maker, an invocation for His blessings."

As it is generally seen, ordinary human beings pray to the Almighty for the fulfilment of their wants and desires. But when the mind rises above the gross plane, they pray for the purity of the heart, knowledge and devotion which are indispensably necessary for God-realisation. Finally when they reach their life's goal they say their prayers, but do it only out of the fullness of their love for God.

At the time of prayer the mind should be withdrawn from all worldly thoughts and desires. The devotee must approach God with reverence

and love. His sole yearning should be for communing with Him. There is no hard and fast rule that prayer must be said in a particular language. The worshipper may pray to the Divine in any tongue he pleases. But the prayer must come from the innermost recess of his heart. What the Lord appreciates are the sincere thoughts and feelings of the devotee. "It is," as Mahatmaji says, "the attitude that matters, not words uttered or muttered."

Is there any efficacy in prayer? or does it all go in vain?—Such doubts arise in the mind of the devotee in the beginning of his spiritual life. But as he goes on with his prayer with sincerity and patience he comes to perceive tangible results. Says Sri Ramakrishna—"Take my word for it that if your prayer come from the bottom of your heart, my Mother shall respond to it, if you will only wait."

Again, is there any fixed rule as to the time that should be devoted to prayer? To the man who has realised God, life is a continuous act of worship and prayer. For the man who lives for the self and acts only to sin, no time is too much. But in the case of the average man there should be some definite hours for prayer. "We are not so exalted," writes Mahatma Gandhi, "as to be able to say that all our acts are a dedication, nor perhaps are we so far gone as to be living purely for self. Hence have all religions set apart times for general devotion. Unfortunately these have nowadays become merely mechanical and formal, where they are not hypocritical. What is necessary therefore is the correct attitude to accompany these devotions."

#### THE ALLIANCE OF PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

The Hindu philosophers were primarily religious men. They built up their systems of thought on the secure basis of the eternal truths they perceived in their spiritual vision. This is the main reason why Hindu philosophy and religion cannot be separated. And intuitive perception being the common goal of both, they have always supported each other in India. But the relation between philosophy and religion has been different in the West. There philosophy being in the main discursive and religion intuitive, they have been railing at each other all along as Prof. Max Muller has aptly said. But they can be harmonised even in Western lands. This is indicated by new movements in modern philosophic thought in Germany.

Mr. Arthur Liebert writing in the current number of the *Monist* points out that contemporary German philosophy has turned seriously to metaphysics. There seems to be a wide-spread demand for a philosophy capable of satisfying the spiritual yearnings of the human soul. Graf Hermann Keyserling is an able exponent of the new metaphysics "growing out of the need for a world-view" in Germany. He is not much interested with intellectual ideals or the enrichment of knowledge. "His primary concern is," says the writer, "rather that the excessively busy and intellectual European again acquires wisdom. This also explains his commendations of the Orient. For in the Orient one may find precisely that 'wisdom,' that poise and repose, that inner self-control and simplicity which we Europeans have lost because of the disintegrating influence of an extreme intellectualism. Philosophy, in his

judgment, should therefore not be an academic discipline concerned with concepts and the attainment of scientific knowledge, but a matter of practical import yielding a world-view. And thus philosophy is for Keyserling an art. It is a form of the art of life, and can be exemplified by him alone who, through self-cultivation, has become a complete 'wise' man."

To the average man the value of philosophy consists in its capacity to remove human misery, and place before him a higher meaning and purpose of life. And not only in Germany but also in all other countries we need a new philosophy, a new metaphysics which, as the writer very happily observes, "is not so much strictly theoretical enlightenment concerning the nature of the world as, much rather, religious edification and inner peace, an indubitable basis for the faith that, despite all horrible disillusion, the world nevertheless has a rational meaning and a rational goal."

The alliance of philosophy and religion, if it can be brought about on a grand scale, will fulfil both philosophy and religion. Philosophy will then get its spirituality from religion and religion its spirit of freedom from philosophy. Such a happy union will certainly mean a great blessing to mankind.

#### CHRISTIANISING PAGAN RELIGIONS

"I think it quite certain," Dean Inge is reported by the *Manchester Guardian* to have recently said, "that the Asiatics will never become Anglicans, Romanists or Scots Presbyterians. If they become Christians they will develop a Christianity of their own, and although some may think that we have the divine promise that Christianity will ultimately be victorious everywhere, I think on the whole that it is likely that they will prefer to Christianise their own religions."

There are missionary zealots who still indulge in the pious hope of evangelising the whole Asia in the near future. Whatever may be their inward feeling, they at least speak in this strain to those whom they try to persuade to contribute to their funds. But the saner among the Christian missionaries are almost convinced that the dream of Christianising the Asiatic races can never be realised. And they are now prepared to be satisfied with Christianising the Asiatic religions instead.

The missionary mind has been disillusioned at least to some extent. In the Islamic countries Christianity does not appear to have a promising career. China once seemed to lay bare "fresh fields and pastures new" for the shepherds of Christ. But the Chinese youth is now positively antagonistic to Christianity which is inseparable from foreign domination. Japan, too, is suspicious of the missionary bands whose evangelical spirit is thought to be often guided by political motives. The missionary's prospect in India, too, does not appear to be as hopeful as before. Powerful religious and political movements have practically stopped the progress of Christianity among the higher and educated communities. The Christian evangelist's only hope now lies in the poor depressed classes. And these classes, again, as Christian writers frankly

acknowledge, embrace the religion of Christ not for any spiritual uplift but only for some social and economic improvement. No wonder then that the missionary has become less ambitious than before.

The educated pagan is too conservative and obstinate to change the faith of his forefathers. And hence the talk of Christianising his religion, and then claiming him as a Christian in spirit, though not in form. Finding it a hopeless task to root out the pagan religions, the missionary is now pleased to think that "the big reform movements in Hinduism, Mohammedanism and Buddhism everywhere to be found in India, are part and parcel of the Christianising process."

Indeed the Christian missionary mind is passing through very great changes on the soil of India. The early Christian propagandist was profoundly ignorant of the people and its religion. To quote the words of a South Indian Christian leader, "He judged others from what he saw on the surface and forthwith concluded that what he had must displace almost everything he saw." With the increase of knowledge the more thoughtful of the missionaries have now come to acknowledge that all religions are from God, although the culmination of them all is the revelation through Christ. A sympathetic missionary has even proclaimed that Christ is the crown of Hinduism. Even this semi-patronising and semi-tolerant attitude is changing still further. If God is the God of all peoples, He must have revealed His truths to the Hindus also. And Christ's life, hitherto interpreted in terms of Western traditions and experiences by Western theologians, may yet yield a new interpretation in the light of India's spiritual heritage which Indian Christians are now claiming as their own. Still greater changes are going to take place as the signs of the times clearly indicate.

The Indian Christian community is anxious to give Christianity a truly Indian expression. "The Indian nature," once wrote an Indian Christian writer, "is not much attracted by the psychology of sin; it requires, on the contrary, the symbolism of form, colour and music. In the light of these interpretations of the Indian nature the whole field of ecclesiastical forms must change." Many Indian Christians hold that the Gita, the Upanishads and some other sacred books of the Hindus should supplement the Bible. They feel that some of these Hindu scriptures are more appealing and philosophical than certain portions of the Gospel themselves. These and similar ideas may be very shocking, if not blasphemous, to many a pious missionary. Whatever it is, those who rejoice to see in the present Hindu renaissance the triumph of the Gospel will do well to note that Christianity too is taking, as some people call it, a decidedly "Vedantic colouring" in India.

#### HINDU INFLUENCE ON FURTHER INDIA

India did not keep her civilisation limited within her natural boundaries, but also spread it to foreign lands beyond her seas and mountains. This took place in the case not only of Buddhism but also of the Mother Religion. Even before the birth of Buddha, the Vedic religion peacefully penetrated into Further India. Adventurous merchants, soldiers and Brahmanas crossed the sea and settled themselves

on the coasts of Indo-China and the Indian Archipelago. And wherever they went, they founded small colonies which were pre-eminently centres of culture. At some places the colonists conquered the aborigines and became their rulers. But this political conquest is of much less importance than the conquest of culture which the colonists achieved wherever they went.

Speaking of this spread of Hindu culture by Aryan immigrants Prof. Jadunath Sarkar observes in the *Modern Review* for July—"Everywhere they carried, propagated and imposed, with their Brahmanic religion and respect for the higher caste,—manners, ideas, usages, rites and institutions of India,—her alphabets, literature, and classical Sanskrit language. It is true that the oldest epigraphic document as yet discovered in Indo-China, which is in pure and classical Sanskrit, does not go beyond the 3rd century after Christ. But the slow work of colonisation and civilisation which preceded that brilliant proof of Indian culture could have begun only 8 to 10 centuries, probably more, earlier, and had already attained to a full expansion in the 4th century B. C."

The greatest of all conquests is the conquest by Dharma—by religion and spirituality—as the great Buddhist emperor Asoka proclaimed in his rock edict. But this conquest began even long before Asoka's council met at Pataliputra about the third century before Christ. History is repeating itself. Indian thoughts are again flowing out vigorously through various channels, but this time, not so much to the East as to the West. Swami Vivekananda was the first Hindu missionary of modern times to travel to foreign lands, holding aloft the torch of India's culture and civilisation. And many of his followers are carrying on his great mission of preaching in the West the grand truths of the eternal religion of India. There is a great demand for able Hindu teachers in the Western countries, particularly in America, as one of our brother-monks writes—"I only wish some more Swamis would come to this country to work vigorously in the different cities of the United States. There is a great field of work everywhere."

We Indians should now cease to be beggars. "Give and take" is the law of life. We must follow this law. We are receiving from the Westerners the wealth of scientific culture, and must now share with them the great verities of our religion and philosophy—our priceless spiritual treasures. We must have our foreign policy. We must spread India's spiritual culture throughout the world, not for any material conquest, but for the spiritual regeneration of the entire human race. And this has ever been the chief mission of the Indo-Aryan race.

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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**THE ROMANCE OF THE SOUL** by the author of "The Golden Fountain". Published by John M. Watkins, 21 Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road, London. W. C. 2.

This is a beautiful book written by a lady (who chooses to remain anonymous) who sets down in a very simple and natural and therefore very impressive and effective manner her experiences regarding the Romance of the Soul. She deals with the question comprehensively enough telling us how to attain it, what its impediments are and how to remove them.

'The romance of the Soul' consists in the personal love of God brought to fruition whilst still in the flesh. "God the Holy Trinity, once found and known by us becomes our All, and by some unspeakable condescension He becomes to us all things in all ways. The soul is filled with romantic and divine love, and instantly God is her Holy Lover. . . . . Oh, the wonders of the fulness of the finding and knowing of God !"

The book is written frankly from the Christian point of view and hence the great importance attached to the study of Jesus and His ways. He is the one and the only Door in the wall that separates us from God. Through constant companionship with Him we get more and more power to reach God till at last the separating wall "goes down in its entirety, never again to rise up and divide us."

The richer and fuller life of God-consciousness and companionship is fully derived from its beginning which consists in the subjugation of lower passions and placing ourselves under the guidance of Jesus allows the Holy spirit to work. A faint echo of this great ecstasy is what is experienced by the lovers of Nature, of music, of the beautiful and romantic and of poetry when in the highest moments reached by them "they are aware of an indefinable something. . . which goes beyond the beautiful into a Nameless Bourn."

It is with great difficulty that we have to resist the temptation of making the author speak for herself by making copious extracts from the book. A still greater temptation is to present parallel passages from Indian mystic literature when almost every statement of the author has been anticipated and expressed in beautiful language. We shall be satisfied with a general statement that the experience of our race as recorded in our literature agrees word for word with what the author has written; only we have to substitute the word 'Guru' for the word 'Jesus'. 'The human reason is too small to stand the greatness of God' (p. 61).

वादो नावलम्ब्यः बाहुल्यावकाशत्वादनियतत्वाच्च

"Never reason about God; for discussion is endless and futile." Narada Sutra (73-74). This one instance is enough to indicate the fundamental agreement between the experiences of the Seekers of God whether they be in the East or in the West.

There are just one or two points, however, on which, in our opinion the writer has laid too strong a stress forgetting that one cannot be dogmatic in matters of religion, for 'God fulfils Himself in many ways.'

To take for example the author's statement that, 'to begin with we must have a set purpose and *will* towards God. In the whole spiritual advance it is first we who must make the effort which God will then stabilise, and finally on our continuing to maintain this effort He will bring it to complete fruition." On other occasions also emphasis is laid upon our doing something before we can hope to get the grace of God. There has been much controversy over this question of God's grace whether it comes spontaneously or only as a reward of an effort on our part. The medieval controversy over the question of predestination and freewill was mainly about this. It is interesting to note that in this country learned opinion is sharply divided and in fact this is one of the fundamental points of difference between the two sections of the followers of Ramanuja called Vadakalai and Tenkalai sects. They use the highly expressive figure of Markataksoranyaya and the Marjaraksoranyaya. The former sect believes that God saves us as the monkey saves its young ones if the young ones were to cling to the mother, whereas the latter hold that His grace is Nirupadhika or Ahetuka Karunyam and He saves us as the cat saves its young ones by taking care of them itself. A catholic poet of England has described this irresistible flow of Divine grace as the Hound of Heaven pursuing the sinner and making escape impossible for him. Manikkavasagar ('the man of ruby-like words') a great Saivite saint extols the inexplicable Release or Salvation granted to him by God purely out of His compassion and not on account of any merit on his part and compares himself to a dog that was at once put in a palanquin. In these high matters therefore it is safer not to be dogmatic.

Then again the author says (p. 53), "But whilst doing all this (i. e., attend to our fellow-creatures, wait upon them, bear with them and work for them) we are not to make them the object of our life: we are not to think that by merely running about amongst creatures frenzied with plans for their social improvement and comfort the nearer we are necessarily getting to God, or even truly pleasing Him. This cuts at the very root of Nishkamyā-Karma or selfless work—the central teaching of the Gita. We are told again and again that work will lead us on to salvation provided it is done without attachment. What the author characterises as not likely to be even truly pleasing to God are the very acts of Yagna (sacrifice), Dana (gift) and Tapas (austerity) interpreted liberally to suit modern requirements, actions which are again and again insisted upon. To perform them in the right spirit is the real Karma-yoga and Janaka and others attained salvation by Karma only.

कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः

In her enthusiasm for what we would call Bhakti-marga or the path of devotion she has been unnecessarily severe on Karma-marga or the path of selfless work. We, however, have been taught that the Lord blesses everyone by whatever way He is approached.



Except for one or two such points of difference of view which are due to the different cultural and spiritual environments in which we have been brought up we are glad to be able to find, as we mentioned before, so many points of complete agreement.

We recommend this book to the earnest student of Religion who will find in it many a valuable practical suggestion for finding God and re-entering the Garden of Eden.

S. K. YEGNANARAYANA AIYAR.

**MATSYAVATHAR** or Saving the World from the Deluge : A picture by Messrs. M. S. Sarma & Sons, Artists and Illustrators, 20, Alangatha Pillai Street, Triplicane, Madras. Aqua-tints. Size 14" x 20". Oriental Art series. Annual subscription Rs. 15 : Single plate Re. 1-8-0 each.

This work of art depicts the allegorical scene of the Matsyavathar (Incarnation of the Lord in the form of fish in the Hindu mythology) splashing its tail on the ocean in deluge. In the picture is seen an ark which is tied to the body of the fish and which holds the king Satya-vrata, the seven Rishis, the seeds of creation and four babies standing for the four Vedas. Flags of victory are also drawn floating on the mast of the ark and suggest the triumph of spirit over matter, the conquest of the eternal laws of Dharma over the surging waves of the deluge.

A long note affixed to the picture gives the philosophical significance behind the allegorical imagery employed to depict the central truths of cosmology. It points out that when the entire manifested universe disappears into the potential form of creation, it never suffers annihilation but only remains in a seed form within the womb of Unmanifested Prakriti (matter). The Vedas are the eternal truths of life. When these truths are lost in the deluge of darkness and ignorance and the surging waves of Samsara (worldly life) envelop the whole world, the Lord comes to the rescue of humanity.

The artists deserve congratulation and encouragement, as their executions are calculated to popularise the truths of religion and philosophy through the effective, though silent, medium of pictorial art.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

SWAMI SHIVANANDA

Srimat Swami Shivananda, President of the Ramakrishna Mission, has been staying in Ootacamund since the 4th of June last. The construction of the Ramakrishna Mandiram, the new centre of the Mission in Ootacamund, is progressing. The main work is expected to be finished about the end of August. After the opening of the Mandiram the Swami proposes to visit Natarampalli, Bangalore, Mysore and Bombay. We hope he will be able to visit Madras again before leaving for Bombay.

SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA

Swami Prabhavananda, Head of the Vedanta centre at Portland, Oregon, U. S. A., whose exposition of the Vedanta is being much

appreciated, paid a second visit to Seattle in May last. An American correspondent writes : " He delivered three lectures under the auspices of the Theosophical Lodge and one on a Sunday morning in the Chamber of Commerce Auditorium for the Congress of Religions sponsored by the First Unitarian Church of Seattle. The hall was crowded to overflowing. The audience evinced very profound interest in the truths of the Vedanta."

#### SWAMI PARAMANANDA'S ARRIVAL IN AMERICA

Swami Paramananda, President and founder of the Vedanta centre at Boston and the Ananda Ashrama at La Crescenta in California, who sailed on 2nd May last, accompanied by Swamis Dayananda and Akhilananda, landed at San Francisco on the 18th June. Swami Prakashananda, Head of the Vedanta Society of San Francisco, was at that time at the Shanti Ashrama where he went with his students for the annual summer classes. In his absence the Swamis were received by Swami Prabhavananda who came for this purpose from his Vedanta Society at Portland, Oregon, and were taken to the Hindu Temple. The same evening Swamis Paramananda and Akhilananda left for La Crescenta and arrived the next morning. Swami Paramananda conducted the Sunday service at the Ananda Ashrama on the 20th June. The same day a reception was held at the Vedanta Society, San Francisco, in honour of Swami Dayananda. Swami Prabhavananda introduced the new Swami to the members and friends of the Society. Swami Dayananda gave a short address suited to the occasion. He was accorded a hearty welcome by Mr. Woolburg, the President of the Society. Mrs. Pettee, a prominent member of the society, also spoke a few words of warm welcome on its behalf.

#### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION RELIEF WORK

In order to relieve the distress caused by famine, flood, cyclone and other widespread calamities, the Mission opened relief centres in Behar, Bengal and Burma.

At Jamtara in the Santal Parganas, the suffering of the famine-stricken destitutes was very acute owing to the failure of crops in two consecutive monsoons, stoppage of work in coal mines and delay in the breaking of the monsoon. Feeding and clothing of the poor had to be done on an extensive scale. The showers which fell recently have brought some relief to the cultivators. During one week 1288 persons of 33 villages were given 63 maunds of rice and 4 maunds of salt. The able-bodied men were employed in sinking 20 new wells and renovating 4 old wells and tanks. Seeds for cultivation, clothes and rice will have to be distributed for another two or three weeks.

In Midnapore, relief was given from a centre opened at Pickemajita. During the first week of the relief operation 44 maunds of rice were given to the helpless people of 45 villages. In the succeeding week 32 maunds of rice were distributed to 666 persons of 39 villages. The condition of the sufferers is gradually improving on account of rainfall during the last few days. The relief work will have to be continued for about a fortnight.

At Arakan, the recent flood and cyclone caused very acute distress. The poor sufferers of six neighbouring villages were given food. Clothing and housing relief is urgently needed.

All contributions in kind or coin will be thankfully acknowledged. They may be kindly sent to :

The President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur, P. O., Howrah, or  
The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, 1, Mukerjee Lane, Baghbazar,  
Calcutta.

*The Report of Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Chittagong, from May 1922 to April 1926.*

This Sevashrama was started by a band of selfless young men of Chittagong in 1922. It conducts a small dispensary which renders medical relief to the sick. There are a small library, a students' home and a primary girls' school attached to the Sevashrama. Religious discourses and classes are held every week in the Ashrama.

The total receipts were Rs. 1,163-13-3 and the expenditure came to Rs. 537-7-3, leaving a balance of Rs. 626-6-0.

The Ashrama is in need of a permanent residence of its own and appeals to the generous public for help.

*The Seventeenth Annual Report of Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bharukati, Narayanpur, Barisal.*

This report is the record of the philanthropic work done by the Ashrama for one year beginning from September, 1924. Besides giving medical relief to the poor, the Ashrama rendered also pecuniary help to indigent persons and students. It has been conducting, for the past ten years, a free school for poor boys. It has also recently started a school for girls. It possesses a library containing a fairly large number of books, magazines and newspapers. A religious class is held once a week.

The total receipts during the year under review including the last year's balance amounted to Rs. 1,077-1-0 and the total expenditure to Rs. 1,027-10-9.

*The Report of Sri Ramakrishna Sevasamiti, Sylhet, Assam, for 1925.*

The activities of this Sevasamiti in the field of education and philanthropy are increasing day by day and are being more and more appreciated by the public of Sylhet. The Samiti is conducting two libraries and four primary schools---three for boys and one for girls---in the neighbouring villages. It also holds regular religious classes and occasional religious meetings for the public. Outdoor medical help, cremation of the dead bodies of helpless people, sinking wells, undertaking relief work during Melas and epidemic times and feeding of the poor are the main items of its philanthropic work.

The total income including last year's balance of Rs. 183-2-0 amounted to Rs. 1,616-11-0 and the total disbursements to Rs. 1,412-8-6.

The institution deserves the active sympathy of the benevolent public.

# THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want

And the first step in getting strength is to uphold

The Upanishads and believe that ‘ I am the Atman.’ ”

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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## P R A Y E R

परात्मानमेकं जगद्वीजमाद्यं निरीहं निराकारमोङ्कारवेद्यं ।  
यतो जायते पाल्यते येन विश्वं तमीशं भजे लीयते यत्र विश्वं ॥  
अजं शश्वतं कारणं कारणानां शिवं केवलं भासकं भासकानां ।  
तुरीयं तमःपारमाद्यन्तहीनं प्रपद्ये परं पावनं द्वैतहीनं ॥  
नमस्ते नमस्ते विभो विश्वमूर्ते नमस्ते नमस्ते चिदानन्दमूर्ते ।  
नमस्ते नमस्ते तपोयोगगम्य नमस्ते नमस्ते श्रुतिज्ञानगम्य ॥

I adore the Lord, the Supreme Atman, the One, the primordial seed of the universe, the desireless, the formless, who is signified by Om, from whom the universe comes into being, by whom it is sustained, and into whom it dissolves.

I take refuge in Him, the unborn, the eternal, the Cause of all causes, the good, the absolute, the Illuminator of all luminaries, the fourth state of Being, the One beyond darkness, without beginning and end, the supreme purifier, devoid of duality.

Salutation to Thee, O the all-pervading, whose form is the universe ! Salutation to Thee who art of the form of knowledge and bliss ! Salutation to Thee who art attainable by asceticism and meditation ! Salutation to Thee who art known by the highest knowledge revealed in the Vedas !

SRI SANKARACHARYA

## SPIRITUAL TALKS WITH SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

[The Swami—who was looked upon by Sri Ramakrishna as his “spiritual son” and was the late President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission—visited Benares in January, 1921. Notes of some of his inspiring conversations held there were taken down by a monastic member in Bengali. They are presented here in translation to our readers.]

Q—Maharaj, how can the Kundalini\* be awakened?

THE SWAMI—It can be awakened through the practice of Japam (repetition of the Lord’s name), Dhyana (meditation) and other spiritual exercises. According to some Yogis there are special forms of meditation and other practices for arousing it. But I believe it can be best done through Japam and Dhyana. The practice of Japam is very much suited to our present iron age (Kali Yuga). There is no other spiritual practice easier than this. But meditation must accompany the repetition of the Mantram.

Q—Does meditation mean thinking of the form of the Deity?

THE SWAMI—It implies thinking of the Divine as both with form and without form.

Q—Well, Maharaj, is it the Guru who decides whether one is fit for the meditation of God with form or without form?

\*Lit. *coiled*. It is described in the Tantras as a coiled serpent sleeping in the human body. Kundalini is the spiritual power latent in all beings. With its awakening begins the real religious life of the aspirant. According to the Yogis there exists in the spinal column a hollow canal called Sushumna with seven lotuses or centres. These centres begin with the Muladhara or the centre at the base of the spinal column, and end in the Sahasrara or the thousand-petalled lotus in the brain. As the Kundalini rises higher and higher, wonderful psychic powers and spiritual visions come to the Yogi. When it reaches the Sahasrara the Yogi attains to the highest spiritual illumination.

**THE SWAMI**—Yes. But the pure mind itself plays the part of the Guru. At times the mind is inclined to think of the form. At other times the formless aspect of God appeals to it. The human Guru cannot be had always. As the aspirant goes on with his spiritual practices, his power of comprehension also increases. Then his mind can act as a guide\*.

The Yogavasishtha Ramayana says that the mental current flows in various directions. The mental energy is wasted through various distractions. A part of it is drawn to the body, another part to the senses, still another part to the objects of sense. The mind is, as it were, tied to many things. Snap all the bonds. Collect the scattered forces of the mind and make them flow in a particular direction. This is the task of spiritual life. Concentrate the whole mind and direct it to spiritual practices until the goal is reached. Strive your best. Be up and doing. You are young now. This is the time to practise spiritual exercises.

You won't be able to do anything when you grow old. Begin, therefore, your spiritual life in right earnest. If you can concentrate all the distracted powers of the mind, you will find what a tremendous energy this will generate. Do it even now. Do it through Japam or meditation or discrimination. Know all these means are equally effective. Take up one of these, and merge yourself in Sadhana. Don't ask questions any more. First do something, and then come and ask questions if you have any.

**Q**—Maharaj, is it true that the Kundalini awakens by the grace of the Guru ?

**THE SWAMI**—Through the grace of the Guru not only can the Kundalini be roused up, but everything else can be had,—even the knowledge of Brahman. But this grace can't be attained easily. One has to strive one's utmost to get it.

\*The Divine Light shines through the purified mind.

Ask the mind in your calm moments if you have done any spiritual practice. It will tell you that you have done absolutely nothing. Practise some spiritual discipline. Begin it now. And devote yourself to this and this alone. Don't pay heed to anything else. Merge into the very depth of your soul.

In the beginning, it is necessary to do some spiritual exercises as part of the daily routine. Whether the mind likes it or not, this must be followed regularly.

## EDITORIAL NOTES

### HINDUISM—ITS UNIQUE POWER OF ASSIMILATION

**T**HE history of the growth of Hinduism is a glorious record of the assimilation by the Aryan culture of innumerable ethnic groups differing widely in race, colour, physiognomy, language, traditions and customs. Owing to its inexhaustible power of absorption the Hindu community has become a veritable ethnological museum containing an endless diversity of races and tribes. It includes within its bounds the so-called Aryan, Dravidian, Negrito-Kolarian and Mongolian races of the anthropologists. It contains the tall and short statured, long and round headed, dark, brown, yellow and white skinned, thick and thin lipped, long and snub nosed, as well as an infinite variety of mixed types baffling all descriptions and classifications. Indeed, to quote the apt words of Swami Vivekananda, Hindu India has been like "an ocean of humanity, composed of race-waves, seething, boiling, struggling, constantly changing form, rising to the surface, spreading, swallowing little ones and again subsiding." The Hindu religion in its grand spirit of universalism opened its hospitable doors to all races and tribes who wanted to be admitted into its fold, and fused them into one people united by a community of ideals, social as well as religious. Indian civilisation, or rather Hindu civilisation is, as E. B. Havell puts it, "like Hindu sacrificial vessels, an amalgam of many metals; but the fire which fused them and separated the dross was the Aryan genius—the philosophy of the Vedas."

## ARYANISATION OF THE INDIAN PEOPLES

The Aryanisation of India is not so much a political, as a cultural conquest—the conquest of Dharma. The early fathers of the Vedic civilisation lived in the Sapta-Sindhu or the land of the seven rivers including the Indus in northern India. But as they went on southwards colonising the country, the boundary of their culture also expanded as a matter of course, until it came to embrace the whole of India—the land watered by the Sapta-Ganga, or the seven Ganges, and bounded on the north by the snow-capped mountains, and on the other sides by the palm-clad sea-shore. “Long before the 4th century B. C. we find,” says R. C. Dutt, “that the entire peninsula has been reclaimed, civilised, and Hinduised, and that primitive barbarians dwelt only in rocks, forests, and deserts which the Aryans disclaimed to conquer. It is not a story of conquests only, which would have little interest for the philosophical reader. It is a story of the spread of Hindu civilisation among hitherto unknown countries and aboriginal nations.” Thus in course of time almost all the indigenous and outlying tribes, both Aryan and non-Aryan, came under the irresistible and elevating influence of the same Indo-Aryan religion, language and civilisation. Great seats of Hindu culture came to be established not only in the north but also in the south, particularly in the lands of the Andhras and the Cholas, which rivalled the great cultural centres of the Gangetic valley.

## HINDUISING THE FOREIGN INVADERS

Foreign invaders were pouring into India from very ancient days. But captive India conquered most of her conquerors culturally. The Sakas, Kushans, Huns and other allied races had to yield to the wonderful assimilative power of Hinduism. Even Persian, Bactrian, Parthian, Greek and other alien elements seem to have undergone the same process of Aryanisation. The Puranas speak of the Abhiras, Gardabhilas, Sakas, Yavanas, Bahlikas and other outlandish tribes. All these peoples underwent in course of time the same process of absorption. Vincent Smith very truly says—“The truth seems to be that when a foreign clan or tribe became Hinduised the ruling families were readily recognised as Kshatriyas or Rajputs, while the rank and file gradually lost their tribal organisation and developed into an Indian caste not regarded as aristocratic.” In the Punjab, Rajputana, Gujarat, Assam and



other parts of the country, Hinduism freely admitted new converts who often espoused the cause of the adopted faith with exceptional zeal and devotion. The roomy fold of Hinduism with its graduated systems of ethical and spiritual cultures accommodated innumerable aboriginal and foreign tribes. And these became completely fused in the melting pot of Hindu society, sometimes leaving only some faint legends and traditions as regards their origin.

### HINDUISM IN FOREIGN LANDS

The Vedic religion not only spread marvellously throughout the length and breadth of India, but also penetrated into Further India. Even before the birth of Buddhism numerous groups of enterprising Hindus crossed the sea, and founded small colonies in Siam, Cambodia, and Champa, and in Java, Bali and other islands of the Indian Archipelago. Says Prof. Phanindranath Bose in his 'Indian colony of Champa'—"we find all the component factors of Indian culture and civilisation having deep root in Champa. The Indian colonists took with them the religion and social manners and customs of India. . . . It has been often asserted that the Hindu religion is not a proselytising religion. In Champa we find that the natives of the country had accepted the Hindu religion as their own, and made numerous temples to the Hindu Gods and Goddesses." In Champa the conquest was both political and cultural. But India valued cultural conquest more than anything else. And the grand records of her cultural influence are to be found in the art and sculpture of Cambodia, Java and other places in Greater India even to-day. All this clearly indicates how greatly the Hindu religious ideals transformed the life and thought of peoples converted to Hinduism. And not only this,—Sanskrit language and Hindu manners, rites and institutions also came to be largely adopted at all the places.

### THE PROCESS OF HINDUISATION

The authors of the Hindu socio-religious system never believed in the extermination or cultural enslavement of the aboriginal and foreign tribes admitted into their fold. Each community after it had imbibed the Aryan culture, was allowed to settle down within the bounds of the Varnashrama Dharma. But it maintained its distinctive individuality and followed its own law of growth. This "gradual Brahmanising" of the aboriginal, non-Aryan or casteless tribes is still going on in

India. As Sir Alfred Lyall observes in his 'Asiatic Studies,' "The clans and races which inhabit the hill tracts, the outlying uplands, and the uncleared jungle districts of India, are melting into Hinduism all over India by a process much more rapid and effective than individual conversions. Among all these aboriginal or non-Aryan communities a continued social change is going on; they alter their modes of life to suit improved conditions of existence; their languages decay, and they gradually go over to the dominant Aryan rituals. They pass into Brahmanists by a natural upward transition which leads them to adopt the religion of the castes immediately above them in the social scale of the composite population among which they settle down." New tribes when they enter the fold of Hinduism bring in also their gods along with them. Hinduism clothes these Gods with new conceptions and thus "civilises both Gods and worshippers." The Varnashrama Dharma differs in one important respect from other social systems. These take the individual as the unit. And the individual, if he happens to amass wealth or grow in power leaves his social group to its fate and rises to a higher level. But being altruistic, the Hindu social system recognises the group and not the individual as the unit. And as such the individual, if he wants to rise to a higher caste, can do so only by taking the whole community along with him. Thus the Hindu method of social fusion or elevation is not individualistic but communistic in the cultural sense.

#### THE "NEW" MISSIONARY SPIRIT IN HINDUISM

Hinduism is a missionary religion believing in cultural conversion. It has no faith in the formal conversion done with the sprinkling of water and muttering of formulas, a process having nothing to do with the change of heart. The so-called proselytisation by the missionary has little spiritual value and is no better than the recruiting of labourers or soldiers by prospects of social and economic betterment, as the Indian Social Reformer of Bombay very aptly put it. And there is an actual craze for this sort of conversion in India to-day. Both the Christian and Mohammedan propagandists have been trying vigorously to convert the followers of the Hindu religion. They are succeeding to some extent in their attempts amongst the poor lower classes. This conversion of its members to alien faiths is a real danger to Hinduism. And as Swami Vivekananda pointed out, so long as other religions are actively engaged in proselytisation, Hinduism also has to take

the necessary steps for the readmission of the perverts, and even to make new converts from other faiths to save itself from dwindling. That is why the Suddhi movement has come into existence. It is only a re-assertion of the old spirit of assimilation adapted to modern needs and conditions. Missionaries of proselytising religions, who have been enjoying the monopoly of conversion at the cost of the Hindu community, resent this "new" spirit which is, in fact, as old as Hinduism itself. "It is a great mistake to suppose that the Hindu religion is not proselytising; the system of caste gives room for the introduction of any number of outsiders"—observed Sir George Campbell. The chief cause why Hinduism is thought to be non-missionary is that it never tried to propagate itself by fire and sword. It never cared to carry the flag of religion at the head of armies, and spread itself by means of forcible conversions and persecution of "heretics."

#### HINDUISM AS A MISSIONARY RELIGION

It is a remarkable fact in the religious history of India that Hinduism has been constantly producing great reformers and revivalists unlike other religions. These great spiritual leaders come to widen the bounds of the Hindu faith. By their saintliness and devotion they bring new inspiration to men and women and bring them under their banner, irrespective of race or caste. They make not only wholesale conversions but also individual conversions. Sankara, Ramanuja and other great "orthodox" revivalists brought the Jains and the Buddhists into the fold of the Mother Religion. Ramana, Kabir, Chaitanya and other Vaishnavite reformers, who tried to eliminate caste exclusiveness from the field of religion, admitted the members of the lowest classes and even Mussalmans into their sects. This process of conversion is still going on in Hinduism in spite of the apathy of the majority of its members. And one of the redeeming features of the modern Hindu renaissance is the breaking down of meaningless conservatism and exclusiveness, and the re-assertion of the spirit of assimilation and expansion. This is manifest in all our reform movements which have come into being since the days of the great Raja Rammohan Roy. And Swami Vivekananda's crossing the prohibited ocean in order to preach to the West the eternal truths of the Vedanta marks a new epoch in the history of Hinduism. It is the beginning of the fulfilment of the great spiritual mission of the Vedic religion outside

the bounds of India. But the Swami did not go to the West with the ordinary "missionary spirit". The conversion he aimed at was not a formal one, a "changing of labels," but the conquest of heart. His dream was, as he said, to conquer the whole world by Hindu spiritual thoughts, and thereby to bring about the union of the East and West on the sure basis of spirituality.

#### HINDU IDEAL OF RELIGIOUS RECONCILIATION

Of all the world's faiths, Hinduism alone has recognised the great truth that all religions emanate from the same Divine Source, and are but different expressions of the One Universal Religion. And conquest of the world by Hindu religion and spirituality means the universalising of the world's religious thoughts, by helping men and women to realise the unity behind the diversity of sects and creeds. Whether it is acknowledged or not, the process of universalisation is slowly going on imperceptibly in the realm of thought. A new age dawned upon humanity with the discovery by the Western savants of the invaluable treasures lying hidden in the Sanskrit literature. Hindu ideas have been steadily flowing into the West not only through the translations of the Hindu scriptures, but also through the writings and teachings of Hindu preachers, poets and philosophers. Through all these and other agencies the universal ideals of Hinduism have been influencing the Western mind and bringing about a remarkable change in the mentality of the Christian missionary towards non-Christian religions. But for this influence it would not have been possible for Dean Inge to speak in this catholic strain—"There is a common ethical and religious ideal influencing the whole civilised world, and each people tries to find it in its own religion, and does find it there. . . . . Supposing they (the Asiatics) worship a being with the same attributes. It does not very much matter whether they call him Buddha or Christ. We must look to things rather than words." An unexpected transformation is taking place in the attitude of the Christian missionary towards Hinduism. As Mr. K. T. Paul—a well-known Indian Christian leader—frankly pointed out in the last *Swarajya Annual Supplement*—"Every religion is from God but the culmination of it all is in the revelation through Jesus Christ. That was in short the new attitude not merely tolerant but reverent and constructive towards all non-Christian religions. . . . . The best missionary opinion is now definitely moving away from that attitude. There is a

more humble approach to the whole question. "If God has been speaking to the Hindus through their experience and history as individuals and groups for forty long centuries of unbroken religious history, obviously He has trained them to understand and interpret His mind in ways different from those disciplined in totally different conditions of life and thought to which the missionary belongs." Thus the message of universalism as preached by the Hindu religion is being gradually recognised also by Christianity. Still greater changes are yet to come. The spirit of toleration is bound to lead to the acceptance of all religions as true. And then from this will follow the exchange and assimilation of one another's ideals. It is this fellowship of faiths that Swami Vivekananda proclaimed at the Chicago Parliament of Religions—"Do I wish that the Christian would become a Hindu? God forbid. Do I wish that the Hindu or Buddhist would become Christian? God forbid. The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must assimilate the spirit of others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth."

## THE PLAN AND PURPOSE OF HUMAN EVOLUTION\*

*By Swami Sharvananda*

TO those who reflect a little upon the process of life, it will appear to be a movement, a flux, a process of becoming. Many of the modern philosophers have built their systems of philosophy on the conception of life as a movement. Taking an unsophisticated view of life, we see that all on a sudden, a child is ushered into being from some unknown state. The child grows in his surroundings, develops his body and mind, fosters ambitions which become partly fulfilled and partly unfulfilled, and finally leaves this world. How and whence he came and whither he goes,—all these are kept hidden from man's knowledge. Philosophers alone venture to offer solutions to these problems.

This life has been designated by ancient thinkers as a Samsarana or a movement from birth to death and again from

\*Notes of a lecture delivered at the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras.

death to birth. Man can be compared to a plant. The plant comes out of the seed, and then it produces the seeds which die giving rise to fresh plants. The animal life also follows the same course. It is something like the rise and fall of the wave and it has been going on from eternity to eternity. It is not a mere rise and fall, but there is a forward motion as well. When we compare the state in which society must have existed some thousands of years ago with its present state, we feel that the present-day society is quite different from the society of pre-historic times. This change is brought about by what we call civilisation. Human society has evolved from the primitive and savage condition to the civilised stage.

Western evolutionists say that evolution is a process of becoming. Now let us consider what it is that evolves in man or in human society. Western evolutionists say that it is the efficiency of life that is evolving. Compared with the ancient savage, the civilised man is more efficient. Again, studying this rather difficult phenomenon of evolution, biology has discovered how it takes place, marked the different links in the chain of life and traced them even to the vegetable kingdom. It was found by observation and analysis that the same process which we notice in a more evolved form in human society is going on also in the animal and vegetable kingdoms. The same law is operating there as well. Life marches forward from the less efficient to the more efficient,—from the vegetable, the insect, the animal, to the man. In this theory of evolution, we notice clearly that the clue is taken from the purely physical manifestation of life as body. Naturally the evolutionists took the theory as embracing what they call the species or the forms of physical expressions. In the beginning of this earth, when it became habitable, the first manifestation of life was vegetable, and then came the reptile, the fish, the lower vertebrate and finally man.

Coming to human society again, we notice different stages of development—the savage, the semi-savage and the civilised. Though there is no change of form, there is a change in the internal life, the mind. Behind the biologists' definition of the evolution of life, we see that the materialistic standpoint is predominant. In short, they say that life is evolving when it manifests more and more power and greater and greater dominance over external nature.

But this explanation of evolution as the expression of capacity to make nature subservient does not lead us to under-

stand the ultimate value of life. For instance, we all instinctively feel that a Christ, a Buddha or a Sankara is the last word of human evolution. Their influence on human society has been tremendous, though they had not the material power which a Napoleon or an Alexander possessed. Hence efficiency is not the test of the evolution of life. Let us consider what the Hindu saints and sages had to say on this matter. To them, this Samsarana appeared to be a peculiar thing. By their analysis and intuitive introspection they found out that evolution does not mean efficiency, but the manifestation of Intelligence (Chit). A cultured or evolved man manifests more intelligence than a savage. What is true of man is also true of animals and vegetables; for the whole creation is a series expressing different aspects of life, all forming different links in one and the same chain. Therefore the intelligence which is seen expressed in man must also be found, though in a lower degree, in the animal and vegetable kingdoms. A close examination will show that the intelligence which is manifested in the perfect man is found in a crude form in the lower orders of life. The Sanskrit word for this intelligence is Chit. It is the pure principle of consciousness. It is this Chit that differentiates the living from the non-living. It is the subtle essence of all forms of consciousness. In human life, it exists in all the three states of consciousness, *i. e.*, Jagrat (the awakened state), Swapna (the dream state) and Sushupti (the deep sleep state). In the Jagrat state, the principle of consciousness is mixed up with its contents, the impressions of the objects which have been perceived and felt. It associates itself with the body as the perceiver and feeler. Then it is called Viswa. In the dreaming state, the consciousness of the objective world is absent and the Ego is closely associated with the memory in the form of ideas. Then it is called Taiias. There is another state of consciousness which is almost purely contentless as in the deep sleep state. It feels its own existence while it is unconscious of other things. This shows that the Chit is not a faculty of the mind but quite different from it. The Chit exists even in the unconscious state when there is no activity of the mind. It is the golden thread running through all the three different states of consciousness and is at the background of all human personality, giving unbroken continuity to it. It is Swavamprajna—conscious of its own existence—and Swaprakasa—self-luminous and so quite unlike material objects which are not self-effulgent. It is the intelligence of the living beings, which illumines the material

objects. It illumines itself in the deep sleep state, the mind in the dreaming state and the objects of the senses in the awakened state.

This principle of consciousness, the Atman, is also found manifested in the vegetable kingdom. The growth of plants and their response to external stimuli as shown by the experiments of Sir J. C. Bose are sure signs of the existence of the same consciousness. This consciousness becomes more and more manifest in the higher and higher grades of life. In the animal, the response is more distinct than in the vegetable, and therefore the consciousness of its own existence is seen to be more vivid. Again in the human plane it is still more vivid. Hence it is the degree of expression of intelligence or Chaitanya that is the real mark of the evolution of life. The Western evolutionists only perceived the external forms or the evolution of the species from less efficient to more efficient forms. They took into account only the efficiency of life but not the expression of intelligence. The ancient sages of India said that the real efficiency or progress of life depends upon the expression of intelligence.

The present state of life is the result of an adjustment. We have to combat against the external and internal forces of nature. The more successful the struggle against these forces, the greater is the evolution. For instance, a savage is more subject to these forces—both external and mental—than a cultured man. He thinks that his diseases are due to the malice of evil spirits and he propitiates them sometimes with success and sometimes without it. The cure is not in his hands. But a civilised man understands the laws of nature and the secrets of physical life and he effects a cure for his diseases. Here is expansion of life, a comparatively greater freedom from the operations of the external forces. The higher we ascend, the more marked becomes the conquest of matter. In a similar way, the civilised man is endowed with a greater measure of refinement, culture, purity and other qualities. In the perfect man, we find an absolute conquest of matter—conquest of the body and mind. He is not fettered. He has completely broken the shackles of matter, from which the principle of consciousness is perfectly set free. The realisation of this principle is the last stage in the evolution of man.

The materialistic evolutionists posit that the urge behind the evolution of life is the will to live or the desire for self-preservation from the opposing forces. Hence they also believe that the embodiment of life which is defeated in the



struggle for existence ceases to exist. They believe in the survival of the fittest. It is only that form of life which is efficient enough to withstand the external onslaught that can exist and progress. But according to Indian philosophers, the principle of life is indestructible and the strongest instinct in a highly evolved being cannot be self-preservation. A thing that cannot die can never think of its preservation. What then is the first principle of life ? It is not self-preservation but Self-manifestation. The Atman is trying to express itself through several sheaths of matter which hide it like so many veils. The more it pierces the veil and expresses itself, the higher is the evolution, the greater the mastery of the soul over matter, the broader the expansion of life. This evolution starts from a crude manifestation and ends in the perfect stage. And the plan of evolution is this : The manifestation of intelligence becomes more and more prominent as life proceeds towards its goal which is the perfect freedom of the Soul from the shackles of matter.

Again, Western evolutionists believe that life is evolving as a whole, from species to species. They say that the human species came from the monkey species. The monkey species from the lower species and so on. In their scheme of evolution, there is no place for individual evolution. But individual life is the supreme thing. The Jatis or species are, of course, evolving, but much more important than that is the evolution of each individual life—the manifestation of his Chit. According to the Garbhopanishad, the individual soul has to pass through eighty-four lakhs of expressions of life or species before it can come to the human type in which it attains the power of discrimination to work out its salvation.

Then, again, we believe that creation is a cycle—a manifestation of something unmanifest. The cosmic energy in the manifested state is called Srishti (projection) and in the unmanifested state it is called Pralaya (dissolution). In the beginning, the whole universe with its living (Chit) and non-living (Achit) principles remained in the Karana or causal state. Viewed from the universal collective standpoint, this Supreme Principle or Intelligence is called Iswara. There is no individuality there. So the Ego does not arise in the Karana state. Then a desire arose in Iswara Who willed—“I am one. I shall be many.” Then the Cosmic energy became a little disturbed and the creation started. The Ego which is at the back of the universal state is called the Hiranvagarbha or the Universal Mind or the Cosmic Ego. It splits

into many subjective and objective forms and causes the multiplicity in the universe. As this is true of the macrocosmic life, it is also true of the microcosmic or individual life. In the individual life also, there are the three states—the Sthula (gross), Sukshma (subtle) and Karana (causal) states. At the time of the Pralaya (dissolution) the gross merges into the subtle and again the subtle merges into the causal. For example, the seed is the causal state of the tree. There is no individuality of the tree in the seed. But when the seed grows, diversification comes in as stem, leaves, flowers, fruits and so forth.

Why does this creation come into being, if God is really perfect and has no desire? In the previous Pralaya (dissolution) many souls have done various Karmas (actions) and they have not attained Moksha (liberation). In order to give them an opportunity to reap the fruits of their actions, and thereby to evolve higher and higher, the universe is projected. At first it is in the etheric state, then it comes to the molecular and atomic states and so on. According to the Vedas, at first, it was in the form of Prakriti Tatwa; then came Manas Tatwa, Akasha Tatwa, Vayu Tatwa, Tejas Tatwa and Jala Tatwa. In each state of the creation those souls who are fit to live in it, come and have their chance. For instance, in this gross physical world, only those with physical bodies can live. Again we have a belief that the soul comes to this world from Chandraloka (the world of the moon) where the bodies are made of the Jala Tatwa. This resembles the Western notion that life has come from the moon. Some think that souls come from Suryaloka where their bodies are made of Tejas Tatwa. The idea is that life came from the subtle to the gross state of existence; from the Prakriti (causal state) to the Akasha (etheric) state, then to the Tejas (luminous) state, then to the Jala (watery) state and lastly the physical gross state. Then a question arises—whether a soul, which has attained the full evolution or has gone to a certain stage in its progress in the previous cycle, should retrace its path once more. No, it is not necessary. They remain in the Vayu or Chandra Loka till the present earth attains that stage of evolution in which it will be fit for their occupation.

Involution is as true as evolution. The same law governs both. If a good and virtuous life takes man up the ladder of evolution, a wicked or brutish life will take him down. But the Vedantins believe that, on the whole, the general trend of

life is upward. Man is bound only to be free, is suffering only to be happy. The Buddhi (determinative faculty) which guides and controls his life, is made of Satwa and the movement of his life is towards the realisation of perfection. Of course, sometimes, there are set-backs and the soul which goes down to the lower plane comes up with redoubled vigour to work up its evolution.

That is the reason why the Vedantins believe that even a worm which crawls in the dust will realise the highest perfection in course of time. This is the plan and purpose of evolution. It is true of both the Jati (species) and the individual. These Jatis are eternal as the human species and different animal and vegetable species. But the individuals come and go finding a place in these Jatis only for a short time. The Jatis are, as it were, the various rungs of the ladder for the individual soul to ascend. The manifestation of the species proceeds along with that of the whole earth. The manifestation of individual beings proceeds with the evolution of the inner capacities or the expressions of the Atman till perfection is reached. With the savage, the interests are first limited to himself, then as he evolves more and more they are widened gradually to the family, the clan, the community and the nation. Ultimately he feels that he is the Self of the universe. The interests of the universe are his interests. Like Buddha, he feels even for the smallest worm that lives. He has freed himself from all the shackles of mind, body and individuality. That is Nisreyasa—the attainment of *summum bonum* of life. When the principle of life has identified itself with the universal life, all its littleness disappears and it is beyond all wants. That state of unalloyed bliss is infinite perfection and unity. There is no going further, and evolution ends in the realisation of perfection of the Infinite. What the modern evolutionists speak of in uncertain terms, the ancient sages of India have by their introspection expressed in greater detail and with greater thoroughness.

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“Reaching the highest perfection, and having attained Me, the great-souled ones are no more subject to re-birth which is painful and ephemeral.”

“All the worlds, O Arjuna, including the realm of Brahma, are subject to return, but after attaining Me, O Son of Kunti, there is no re-birth.”

## THE LIGHT OF ASIA\*

*By Prof. A. R. Wadia, B. A., Bar at-Law*

I THINK, as true men, we have to recognise with feelings of great shame and humiliation that India is a fallen country to-day. But it cannot fail to be a perpetual source of inspiration to us to know that India was not always that and that Indian civilization is one of the hoariest in the world, that India that has fallen now, had in the past vitality enough to give birth to some of the greatest statesmen and warriors such as Chandragupta and Asoka in ancient times and two great empire-builders—Akbar and Shivaji—even in modern times. In the realm of philosophy, in the realm of music, in the realm of architecture, India has not had her peers. But it seems to me the greatest glory of India is that more than any of these things—and these are among the greatest in the world—she has been the birth-place of no less a person than Lord Buddha who has been the source of light and salvation to millions of people. Though technically a Buddhist may not exist in India to-day—though technically there is no shrine in India which is worshipped as the shrine of Buddha—, yet, it is a source of pride to feel that millions of people in China and Japan and other countries have always been content to call themselves followers of the greatest Indian. And even in India, though we do not technically follow Buddhism, the teaching of the great Teacher has left a perpetual mark on the life—the mode of thinking and worship of the millions of Indians to-day. Not merely this : of all the Asiatic teachers apart from Christ, Buddha has been the one man that has succeeded in forcing the admiration and homage even of the proud Europeans of to-day so that many of them have come to feel the inspiring personality of a great teacher whose memory we have met to-day to celebrate. It would be sheer presumption to say that we have met to-day merely to honour the great Buddha. He is not in the least in need of our honour. We are honouring ourselves by showing that in spite of these fallen days we have got spirituality enough to pay homage to the memory of a great man's name and a great man's deeds and teachings.

\* A lecture delivered at Bhagawan Buddha's birthday celebration held on 27th May, 1926 under the auspices of Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Mysore.

I need hardly say I do not pretend—in fact, I cannot pretend—to stand here on this platform, as a follower of Buddha himself or as one who has thoroughly mastered his philosophy, and if you expect a profound Buddhist or a profound authority on Buddhism to lecture to-day, I should unhesitatingly sit down. I stand here to-day as one of the ordinary mortals for whom Buddha lived and taught. Even in an age when learning was esoteric, when it was the privilege of a few individuals, the glory and personality of Buddha appealed to all the ordinary mortals. His message was meant for all. He lived literally for humanity. And there was nothing human which was alien to him. His message was at best to the ordinary mortals like me and since I, as an ordinary mortal, have learned something from the teachings of the great Teacher, I think I have justification to stand upon this platform to address a few words to you—for what?—not to praise him, for, that he does not need, but to spend a few minutes or perhaps an hour in recalling some of the pregnant teachings of that great soul—teachings which if we enshrine in our heart can yet make of this fallen India a better India. It is in that light that I mean just to refresh my memory and your memory about that great teacher.

We all know that about 2,500 years ago, India had the glory of giving birth to a great teacher. We know also how he was not born to ordinary humble parents as Christ or Muhammad. Here was a man—a great religious teacher—born in a princely family, perhaps not princely in the ordinary sense of the term, for modern scholars have proved that he belonged to a more or less republican community—the Licchavis. They had not a king in the accepted sense of the term—it was a democratic community. It was in such a community that young Buddha was born. Perhaps, he had not all the accomplishments and accompaniments of royal munificence and magnificence that we usually associate with him, but there is not the slightest doubt that he was born in a noble family. He was a fond child of doting parents and that was why he was brought up with tender care and extraordinary solicitude so much so that it appears his father was unwilling that the young child should get even the shadow of misery to cross his path. Here was a young man bred in all the atmosphere of comfort and even luxury, an atmosphere so unsuited to real spirituality. So, for all practical purposes, we might expect him to have grown up as so many ordinary princes grow up—lost in the

pleasures of the world. But that was not the case with Buddha. Whatever he tried to do, the young prince felt dissatisfied with his life of ease and luxury. The fond wife and son and doting parents could not keep him from the lure of humanity, and when, in course of time, as he came face to face with misery and suffering, as he saw an old man bent with age, as he saw a man suffering from disease, as he saw a corpse taken to the burial ground, he came to realize that life was transitory, he felt a loathing for his own life of ease and luxury, and here was a prince who felt that he must turn his back upon such life and upon his worldly possessions and all his worldly status. Here was a man who was prepared to sacrifice the possibility of succeeding as a chief of his tribe. And one night in the dark, he left his house to seek illumination so that he could be of service to humanity.

In one of his pregnant sentences Buddha says—"Let me be enlightened for the service of humanity". He was not caring to redeem his own narrow individual soul. He was hungering to fulfil the greater ambition of serving humanity as a whole. He felt it his duty to serve humanity and for that, he followed—as an ordinary Hindu would do, the practices of his age: he spent six long years in austere, rigorous penance, fasting and mortifying himself in all ways, so that at the end of six years, on one occasion, he fainted through sheer fatigue and was on the point of losing his life. He felt he had not yet been enlightened. Then he gave up this asceticism just as willingly as he had given up the life of pleasure and began to lead the life of an ordinary mortal, but concentrated upon the deeper purpose which has always stirred the heart of humanity in all countries. And as a result of the new life, he felt that he got the enlightenment and he also felt that he had something to teach to the world. This was at the age of 35 years. He lived till his eightieth year and so for forty-five years he poured out his gospel in full, in the form of parables, in epigrams and in *slokas*, and lived a life of pure spiritual activity. He poured out the treasures of his heart first to a few admiring followers, and then, as he went from town to town, he enlightened the people, he kindled a new zest profoundly spiritual which indirectly stirred the whole world. It was for that stirring that Buddha went forth into the world, not as one who was sick of life and who wanted to turn away from it—he did not want to hug his own salvation—but as one who felt that as long as there was misery in the universe, so long there could be no rest for him. He

felt the oneness of humanity. He said that it was impossible for man to find rest so long as he felt and knew the existence of misery and suffering on earth. He felt that the secret of happiness lay in losing the sense of individuality and in helping the world at large to a better and to a higher life. That was his sense of happiness and it was in that sense that he worked, and worked so splendidly that his name to-day is impressed in the hearts of millions as that of the greatest of mankind. It is such a person whose life and teachings we are met to-day to refresh our memory with.

It is very often taken for granted that Buddhism is a religion entirely different and distinct from Hinduism. There is a sense in which the statement is quite true. There is a sense in which the statement is utterly false. There is a sense in which it is true to say that Christianity is nothing but a development of Judaism. But the development is so novel as to justify the claim of Christianity to be a higher religion than the narrow and almost tribal Judaism. So, too, in the case of Buddha who was born a Hindu, who was brought up in the Hindu atmosphere, who had followed Hindu precepts and Hindu teachings, who had assimilated some of the most important basic conceptions of Hindu philosophy. It would indeed be surprising if a man born in a certain community, brought up in a certain atmosphere, should all of a sudden give up that atmosphere, be entirely independent of it. That would indeed be against all laws of historical evolution as we have come to realize to-day. Buddhism was so far a development of Hinduism but with a marked difference—a difference which would justify the claim of Buddhism to be a higher religion—to be more spiritualised. I mean no disrespect to Hinduism when I say this, because the Hindus could not possibly have been blind to the real greatness of his teaching or to the real spirituality of his message ; for we know that the post-Buddhistic Hinduism is not the Hinduism of the pre-Buddhistic days. And this reveals the spiritualising influence of Buddhism. Buddhism, even while dying in India, gave up a part of its inspiration and spirituality to the Hinduism that came after it. Hence, it would be true to say that Buddhism is dead in India and also to say that it is not dead in India, and it would be better for India if the living elements of Buddhism were as living to-day in India as they were in the days of Asoka. We have to recognise that even in the case of Christ who has been held as the Son of God by his followers, it is asserted that he was a reformer of the Judaic faith.

Much more so, perhaps, in the case of Lord Buddha who himself did not claim to be a God, though later generations raised temples to him and worshipped him as God. There is greater justification in regarding him as a reformer of Hinduism. There are some main elements of Hinduism with which he was dissatisfied. There are three things which he preached against and rebelled against. The first was the extreme ritualism of the Hindu religion as it was practised in his time. The second thing that he rebelled against was—and perhaps this was a part of the first—the frequency of the animal sacrifices that were offered to the deities in the name of religion. Thirdly, it was the ascetic practices which were so common in the Hinduism of the day,—which are not dead in the Hinduism of to-day. But all these three things, Buddha felt, were useless. From the higher standpoint of spirituality, he felt the utter nothingness of mere spiritualism. He felt the heinousness of sacrificing innocent lives of animals for the purpose of gaining some boon from the deity. And by bitter experience of six long years, he had come to realise that no man could be spiritual, that no man could attain the highest by mere ascetic practices. Thus on one occasion when a Brahmin came to him and praised the virtues of the Bahuka river as having the potency of destroying the sins of the sinners, Lord Buddha said, “The Bahuka, the Adhika cannot purify the fool of his sin, bathe he himself ever so often. . . . No river can cleanse the doer of evil, the man of malice, the perpetrator of crime. To the pure it is ever the holy month of Phaggu. To the pure it is always a perpetual fast. To the man of good deeds it is a vow everlasting. I have thy bath here, even here, O Brahmin, be kind to all beings. If thou speakest not false, if thou killest not life, if thou takest not what is given thee, secure in self-denial,—what wouldst thou gain by going to Gaya? Any water is Gaya to thee.” And similarly against asceticism he declared — “To keep the body in good health is a duty. Otherwise we cannot trim the lamp of wisdom, and keep our minds strong and clear. Water surrounds the lotus flower, but does not wet its petals.” In another place, he said, “The lamp that is not cleansed and not filled with oil will be extinguished ; and a body that is unkempt, unwashed, and weakened by penance will not be a fit receptacle for the light of Truth. ”

His message was : “ Do not depend upon external favours for the enlightenment of your own soul ; do not assume that your sins could be forgiven by shedding the blood of an animal



or that your sins could be expiated by prayers of another man who is paid to pray." Buddha, with the true insight of a spiritual genius knew—and none knew better than he—that "man literally is the architect of his own fortune," that a man is what he is because of himself and not because of any other agency, human or divine. It was in that sense that he asked his followers to be self-reliant, to be pure in their own actions, in their own thoughts and in their own lives. And he held out the hope that whosoever can be pure in that way, has a right to Nirvana or salvation or whatever we call it. He held out the hope to every human being—however rich he be and however lowly he be—that if he acts aright, he cannot but attain the end which is the birth-right of every human being—to cultivate his own soul life, to assert his own spirituality and to assert his own dignity in the realm of spirit. Hinduism of that day was different from that of to-day. There was a division of mankind according to their capacities—some are fit to be educated and some are not. Some can educate themselves as a matter of right and some must not be educated as a matter of right. That was not the spirit of Buddha. He, as the embodiment of humanity at its highest and its best, insisted upon and emphasised the right of every human being to cultivate this higher spirituality. That is the reason why on one occasion he told his disciple Ananda— "I have preached the truth without making any distinction between the exoteric and esoteric doctrines, for in respect of the truths, Ananda, the *Tathagata* has no such thing as the closed fist of a teacher who keeps something back." Here was a doctrine of Buddha's heart to be openly laid at the service of humanity. Whoever wanted to better himself could come to him who was a huge reservoir of spiritual enlightenment, could be educated in his teachings and then could follow him. He said: "No man should preserve to himself the Truth. The followers should not keep It for themselves as a miser keeps his own gold." He therefore insisted that his followers should go into all lands and preach his gospel. He said to them—"Tell them that the poor and the lowly, the rich and the high, are all one, that all castes unite in this religion as do the rivers in the sea." And that was the message which was of a curious significance in the historic conditions of the India of his day, as that is the message much more sorely needed in the unfortunate India of to-day.

His teachings were pervaded by a lofty idealism. As we saw before, the first awakening to spiritual unrest was caused

by his sense of suffering. In one of the passages which *prima facie* looks pessimistic, he says: "Birth is suffering; old age is suffering; death is suffering; sorrow and pain are suffering; affliction and despair are suffering; to associate with loathsome things is suffering; failure to attain what we love and the failure to attain what we long for are suffering." One feels that suffering; we begin with suffering and end with it. It is the very sense of the acuteness of suffering that made Buddha a great teacher, for he explained this suffering in terms of the famous Hindu conception of Karma—"Man is the architect of his own fortune." He has built his own Karma and what he suffers from is the result of his Karma. "Look not to any one for release besides yourself." "Work out your salvation with diligence."

"Not by birth the outcaste label,  
Not by birth the Brahmin know!  
By actions only are we able  
To judge a man high or low."

It is Karma that determines it. And what is this Karma which helps a man to spiritual salvation? It is nothing but ethical life—moral life in all its intense purity. Hinduism, whether as a religion or as a philosophy, may have generally attained greater heights than other religions. But as a system of morality, Hinduism has been weak, comparatively speaking of course\*. It was that weakness that was felt by Buddha and it was that weakness that was exposed by Buddha. So we find a curious paradox that Buddha who is said even by European authors to have

\*Comparing Hindu and Buddhist ethics, Dr. Rhys Davids says—"A great deal of his (Buddha's) morality could be matched from earlier or later Hindu books. Such originality as Gautama possessed lay in the way in which he adapted, enlarged and systematised that which had already been well said by others, in the way in which he carried out to their logical conclusion principles of equity and justice already acknowledged by some of the most prominent Hindu thinkers." In refuting the general notion that Buddhism is a religion entirely different from Hinduism, Prof. Wadia himself aptly observes: "So also in the case of Buddha who was born a Hindu, who was brought up in the Hindu atmosphere, who had followed Hindu precepts and Hindu teachings, who had assimilated some of the most important basic conceptions of Hindu philosophy. It would indeed be surprising if a man born in a certain community, brought up in a certain atmosphere, should all of a sudden give up that atmosphere, be entirely independent of it. That would indeed be against all laws of historical evolution as we come to realise to-day." This observation is also applicable to the influence

been the most intellectual of prophets, was weak in philosophy and metaphysics. But that weakness did not trouble him, for he knew that metaphysics must necessarily be for the few. What he wanted was a message which could go straight to the hearts of the lowliest—no metaphysical jugglery but the direct, pure essence of morality. That was what he wanted to instil into the minds and hearts of all his contemporaries and succeeding generations. It is in that sense that he emphasized the moral Karma or pure life. It was his desire to uplift every human being. But he recognised that it was a hard task before him. For generations, people had been born and had died and he knew that for generations men would be born and would die. He felt that this Karma necessarily led to a continuous series of re-births, and if that were the only end, there could be no religion more pessimistic than Buddhism. But that was only the beginning. What he as a Buddha felt was that there was power in every human being to put an end to the cycle of births and deaths and that power lay within himself—there it was, not extraneous,—that in the pure depths of our own soul, each one of us could fight out his own battle of life. Each one of us must resist temptations to a low life. There is suffering. No man is without it. No human being can entirely escape suffering but there is the power to overcome that suffering. It is from that that the famous idea of Karma and redemption comes in, and it is not a mere dogma with him. He does not merely tantalise human beings with impressing on them this acuteness of suffering and raising a false hope of redemption. He shows them the way by which these sufferings are to be met, the way by which the soul can realize this intense power of spirituality. He felt that that was done not by benevolence alone nor by of Hindu moral teachings on Buddhism.

Buddhist ethics is much less comprehensive than Hindu ethics. It certainly lays strong emphasis on the highest ethical aspects as we find in the Upanishads and other sacred books of Hinduism. But the exaltation of the ethical standard does not mean that all the people to whom it is presented to follow and who are of varying degrees of moral culture can all at once become highly ethical. As the later history of Buddhism shows, the inordinate desire of men and women for leading the highest ethical life regardless of their capacity to do so was one of the main causes of the degeneration of Buddhism in India. Hinduism, on the other hand, guards itself against this danger by giving a graduated course of ethical training which takes the aspirant from the lowest to the highest step. Hindu ethics is inseparable from metaphysics, and even in its highest aspect it is but an ante-chamber to Truth that transcends morality which is relative. All this clearly shows that Hindu ethics has not been comparatively "weak".—Ed., V. K.

meditation alone; because benevolence is action, and meditation gives knowledge. It is action that is spiritualised by knowledge. It is knowledge—which is not mere abstract knowledge—that is redeemed by action. And it is the union of these that he emphasized and he held out the famous eight-fold path for the elevation of mankind.

*(To be concluded)*

## THE DOCTRINE OF EXPERIENCE AS THE ONE SELF

### I. INTRODUCTORY (1)

*By Prof. K. Sundararama Aiyar, M. A.*

THE Vedantic Doctrine of Experience (or Reality) as interpreted to his school of disciples by Sankaracharya has been much misunderstood and attacked by numerous foes from his own time to the present day. The reason has been, chiefly, that he taught it not as a mere theory, or mere *ipse dixit*, as prejudiced persons assume, but as Experience, Knowledge, or Illumination, supreme, ultimate, innermost,—the basal Self of all phenomenal existence and activity, material, mental, spiritual, personal, or other, in this world or elsewhere. He taught it directly and *by word of mouth*—at least in the first instance—to his disciples, as we gather from a direct statement made by one of the foremost of them, Padmapada,—though he used the Three Prasthanas (sources of systematised knowledge), viz., the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-Gita, and the Sariraka-Mimamsa-Sutras, as the vehicle for conveying to the world his teaching in all its simplicity, fulness, and implications. Later on the teachings must have been gathered together and written down under his direction and supervision, and published everywhere by means of manuscript copies eagerly sought all over the land by enthusiastic followers of the Vedic religion. We learn from one of Sankara's works that, in his own days, as subsequently, he had numerous determined opponents who upheld the Bheda-Vada

—the doctrine of Pluralism, as it is now called in the West— in various forms on the basis of mere analogies, biological or mechanical. In a passage of his Bhashya on the Taittiriya-Upanishad, the Purvapakshin is made to say :—“ How is it that, when there are many opponents, you are an upholder of the doctrine of the One Existence ? ” To which the (Monistic) Vedantin replies :—“ To me an auspicious circumstance this which you have mentioned, viz., that against me who maintain the doctrine of the One Existence only there are many opponents who postulate Plurality (of existences). I shall overcome all of them, and I shall now begin the discussion.” This passage enables us to confirm the substantial accuracy of the later portraiture of his life as one spent in constant controversy and contention against numerous opponents representing various schools of speculation. We also see with what alacrity he welcomed opposition, what majestic confidence of success marked his entry into and progress along the arena of discussion, and how he came to be proclaimed or accepted as a Loka-Guru (World-Teacher). His controversial campaign not only met the requirements of his age, but accorded well with such methods of interpretation and exposition of thought as were still current among the Vedic and philosophical schools of the land,—and his skill as a dialectician produced so profound and colossal an impression and gained such wide acceptance as to make his polemical progress over all quarters of the land—*Sankara-Dig-Vijaya*, as it is still called—an event of everlasting significance. His dialectics still remain an inviting study and possess an enchantment all its own,—one not realisable except by those who have familiarised themselves with its methods of developing the argument so as to establish the true purport of each Vedic passage (the “*Vishaya-l'akya*,” as it is called) taken up for discussion.

We shall now deal with two topics which, at our very start, are clearly of first importance. (1) Is Sankara's doctrine of Experience supported by the Three Prasthanas ? (2) Can we claim for it the support of a great and weighty tradition before Sankara's time ?

As regards the first point, all modern authorities, Western and Indian, have totally failed in arriving at an agreement regarding the dates of the Upanishads and other ancient Vedantic authorities. The man in the street is necessarily inclined to accept as gospel truth the side on which the big battalions are

ranged. But this rough and ready way of arriving at a decision may suit us well in ordinary life, but can never be regarded as satisfactory when we are engaged in the investigation of such ultimate problems as the supreme reality, the goal of life, the methods of purification of the soul, etc. Here at least the influence of personality or partisanship ought not to have weight, and each individual or school must, without rest and without haste, continue its endeavours and inquiries from age to age so as to illuminate and influence the human mind to an ever-widening extent. We are not in a position to apply any uniform and reliable test for deciding which of the Upanishads are really old and which are not. If we are to regard as old those from which passages are taken up for discussion in the Sutras of Badarayana, then Svetasvatara, Kaushitaki and other Upanishads will have to be regarded as old. And yet Dr. Roer—as we learn from Colonel Jacob—holds that the Svetasvatara “does not belong to the series of the more ancient Upanishads” and that it was “composed not long before the time of Sankaracharya.” If, secondly, we resolve to regard as old those Upanishads which have received the honour of being commented upon by Sankaracharya, then we have to take account of the fact that he is the author of Bhashyas on the Svetasvatara and the Nrisimha-tapaniya Upanishads. *Thirdly*, if, as some scholars hold, the Svetasvatara is “the oldest Upanishad in which the illusory nature of the world is plainly taught” (Col. Jacob), and is therefore clearly post-Buddhistic, we have to account for the fact that Ramanujacharya who denies that doctrine accepts this same Upanishad as of equal authority with the rest and quotes from it throughout his great work, the Sri-Bhashya. All other schools of Vedantic thought in India, too, accept this Upanishad as having the same authority as any other. The late eminent scholar, A. E. Gough, has also fully agreed that “its teaching is the same as that of other Upanishads,—the teaching that finds its full and legitimate expression in the system known as the Vedanta.” The truth is that in India the authenticity of an Upanishad is not made to depend on its date—for the determination of its date, like that of every other part of the Veda, has ever defied, as it does even to-day, the ingenuity, however persistent, of the scholar and the antiquarian,—but on the circumstance that it has ever been included in the canon accepted as classical by the Vedic Sakha (school or succession of teachers) to which it belongs. Whenever questions of date are raised, much heat is caused, but rarely

or never does there spring forth the light which is calculated to remove our ignorance of the stages of development in the growth of a doctrine or of the conditions which originally gave rise to it. It is easy to see that questions like these can never be decided by counting votes ; the still, small voice behind continues to revolt against such a decision, and often the whirligig of time is known to bring its revenges.

We pass to the *second* topic, viz., Has the Vedantic Doctrine of Experience the support of a great and weighty tradition before Sankara's time ? Dr. Thibaut has said in his Introduction to his translation of Sankara's Bhashya on the Sutras of Vyasa :—"Sankara does not, on the whole, impress one as an author particularly anxious to strengthen his own case by appeals to ancient authorities." This view is clearly a mistake. For, in his various Bhashyas, he refers, expressly or by implication, to the teachers of his school who lived before him. As our present purpose is to give brief statements regarding the leading tenets of his doctrine and interpretation of Vedanta, and as this first section is intended as a brief preliminary to it, we shall content ourselves with but two references. At the commencement of his Bhashya on the Taittiriya-Upanishad, Sankara says:—"I offer my constant obeisance to those Gurus. (teachers) who, in former times, have commented upon all the Upanishads by explaining the words, the sentences, and the proofs." Again, in his Gita-Bhashya, Sankara makes the following broad pronouncement :—"Whatsoever one's mastery of all branches of knowledge, one who does not know the Sampradaya (the traditional interpretation of a context or passage) must be discarded in the same way as we discard all perverse and ignorant people." Also, in his Bhashya on the Prasna-Upanishad, Sankara addresses an appeal couched in severe terms of denunciation to all who attempt to learn for themselves this Vedic doctrine of Experience without the aid of a teacher who can convey its true import according to the traditional interpretation :—"Give up all your egoistical fancies and listen to the meaning of the Sruti. Independent effort, even if continued for a hundred years, cannot disclose the true import of the Sruti to those whose heads are filled with self-conceit and who foolishly assume that they can know it for themselves (and without a qualified teacher's aid)."

A *third* point which we must bear in mind at our start is that Sankara does not build up a philosophical system of his

own, or even expound the doctrine of a philosophical school or sect to which he belonged, for the benefit of those who are interested in it. What, then, is the exact relation of this doctrine of Experience (or the One Self) to its basic sources,—the Three Prasthanas already mentioned. Sankara's aim was to formulate the *synthetic* teaching of the Veda (*Samanvaya*, as it is called by Vyasa) without mixing it with, or reading into it, any non-Vedic doctrines, beliefs, or traditions, however venerable or popular. The aim of the Veda is to explain to man his real nature and high destiny and to guide him along the path which leads him to the goal of life. Hence, it is regarded in India as an independent source of knowledge side by side with sensuous perception (*Pratyaksha*) and the processes of ratiocination (*Anumana*). Sankara points out:—

"The authoritativeness of the Veda with regard to the matters stated by it is independent and direct, just as the light of the sun is the direct means of our knowledge of form and colour." We cannot understand the Veda in the light of any other authority,—even that of the Agamas; on the other hand, the Veda, as traditionally interpreted and understood among the succession of disciples preserved without interruption from Sri Narayana himself, is the supreme authority in the light of which we have to test the value of all other sources of spiritual knowledge, whatever their pretensions or the vogue they have gained among men. These other sources have value only in so far as they accord with the teaching of the Veda (or are at least not inconsistent with it),—and they lose all claim for acceptance or recognition, when they are directly in conflict with it. We must not also forget that even such recognised and popular sources of spiritual knowledge as the Itihasas and Puranas can be consulted or accepted as authoritative, in regard to our Vedic doctrine of Experience *only* when the traditional interpretation (or Sampradaya) current among the enlightened disciples and teachers of this (*i. e.*, the *Advaitic*) school of *Mimamsa* (*inquiry*) fails to clear up any doubts or difficulties which may arise and demand a solution. Hence we gladly quote Dr. Thibaut's view that Sankara's statement or interpretation of the true doctrine marks "a strictly orthodox reaction against all combination of non-Vedic elements of belief and doctrine with the teaching of the Upanishads." It, therefore, cannot but seem strange that Dr. Thibaut should also hold that "the philosophy of Sankara would on the whole stand nearer to the teaching of the Upanishads than the Sutras of Badarayana." This view is entirely untenable, for all



schools of Vedanta are agreed that the Sutras are intended to present the essence of the doctrine of the Upanishads in a reasoned form free from all doubts, imperfections, and inconsistencies. Sankara makes for himself the significant avowal and claim :—" The Sutras have merely the purpose of stringing together the flowers of the sentences of the Vedanta. The sentences of the Vedanta referred to in the Sutras are discussed by us here. For, the realisation of the Brahman (the one Self) is produced by the determination, consequent on discussion, of the true purport of the sentences of the Vedanta, not by any other sources of knowledge." No Indian Vedantin, whatever the school to which he owns allegiance, can be found willing to admit that the Sutras of Vyasa do not teach the essential tenets of his school, or be indifferent to a proposition of that kind. The Sutras owe the authority they command to the fact that they contain in a convenient, concise and systematised form the teachings lying scattered in the voluminous range of the Vedic revelation known as the Upanishads. In one place of his Sutra-Bhashya, Sankara calls Vyasa by the designation of *Vedacharya*. Vyasa's function as an Acharya is to teach the world the essentials of the Vedic doctrine, besides compiling and distributing the Vedas into Sakhas. The Sariraka-Mimamsa—otherwise called Brahma-Sutras—was composed by him in the fulfilment of that mission and function,—to clear all doubts regarding the true doctrine of Experience (Brahman) as contained in the Upanishads, to expand hints, to connect what is seemingly unconnected, to reconcile what seems conflicting, to contrive and construct a harmonious whole which will attract, inspire, enlighten, and satisfy the human mind. Finally, before leaving the present topic, we may briefly state that, when it is once admitted, as has been done by Dr. Thibaut and others like him who hail from the West, that Sankara's interpretation of the doctrine of Experience is in entire consonance with the contents of the Upanishads, everything that has to be said in its favour has been said and that he stands fully justified before the world. The Sutras of Vyasa and even the Bhagavad-Gita are only classed as Smritis, and owe their unquestionable authority and universal acceptance to the fact that they conform in all essentials and even wholly to the doctrine of the Upanishads of the Holy Vedas.

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# NOTES AND COMMENTS

## THE MODERN REVIEW ON SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S TREATMENT OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

### CRITICISM BY THE MODERN REVIEW

**I**N a note on Prof. S. N. Das Gupta who sailed for America as a delegate to the International Congress of Philosophy to be held at Harvard this year, the *Modern Review* for August informs its readers : " The little interest that Swami Vivekananda's popular lectures had aroused in America soon vanished ; and as his treatment of Indian Philosophy was never intended to be scholarly, his lectures failed to satisfy the scholarly interest of the philosophers of the West and did in a way more harm than good to the cause of Indian Philosophy in the estimation of scholars and philosophers. "

We do not know whether the Modern Review writes the above from direct knowledge or from information supplied by others. But whatever the source of the news may be, the interest in Indian Philosophy which the Swami created in America was not little but profound ; this interest, as distinct from sensation, has not disappeared, but is steadily increasing ; the Swami's treatment of philosophy was not merely popular but also scholarly at the same time ; and it has done no harm but great good to the cause of Indian Philosophy by presenting it in a form, at once lucid and learned.

Enthusiasts exaggerate the Swami's influence in America too much and think as if the majority of the American people have become Hinduised in thought. Cold critics, on the other hand, belittle the influence to no small extent, and imagine it has passed away completely. But the truth lies between the two extremes.

### SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S GREAT INFLUENCE IN AMERICA

At the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago, Swami Vivekananda made, as the *Rutherford American* observed, " a profound impression not only on the audience who listened to him, but on the religious world generally. " Dr. Barrows, Chairman of the General Committee of the Congress also frankly declared—" Swami Vivekananda exercised a wonderful influence over his auditors. " And through the glowing reports of the newspapers which were full of appreciation for " the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions, " as the *New York Herald* spoke of the Swami, his influence spread far and wide in the American continent and even outside it. After the Parliament of Religions this " orator by Divine Right " spoke in many cities and towns to " immense audiences " who, in the words of the *Detroit Free Press* had " but one opinion of praise, " and were " enthusiastic over his magnetic power and his way of giving light and life to every subject " he touched upon. The *New York Critique* wrote about the Swami thus—" He

has preached in clubs and churches until his faith has become familiar to us. . . . His culture, his eloquence and his fascinating personality have given us a new idea of Hindu civilisation." Great tributes were also paid to the Swami by many other papers too numerous to mention. In short, wherever the Swami went, he attained "wonderful success" through his lectures and classes. The Vedantic ideas gained ground at many of the important places in America, and more so in the hearts of numerous men and women of unquestionable culture and sincerity, who found in the Swami's sublime teachings "new courage, new hope, new strength, new faith to meet life's vicissitudes," as Mrs. Ella Wheeler Wilcox, one of America's well-known poets, put it aptly. We ask the *Modern Review* : Does not all this prove that the interest roused by the Swami was not little but was profound ?

#### CONTINUATION OF THE INFLUENCE

Before the Swami left America, he had the pleasure of seeing his Vedanta work established there. And this movement started by him has been continued by his brother-monks, disciples and followers. The mighty current of spiritual thought which emanated from this "cyclonic Hindu" swept over the United States of America for some time. But after the first flood was over, it settled down gradually as is always the case. It has since then been flowing like a placid stream supplying the waters of life to many a thirsty soul dissatisfied with narrow doctrines and dogmas, and yearning for a liberal and vitalising interpretation of religion. A number of Vedanta centres are at present working in America for the spiritual uplift of American men and women. Many of these centres are established in their own permanent buildings. New centres are also coming into existence. And there is an ever-increasing demand for more centres and more Swamis to guide them. The circulation of the Vedanta literature and journals is also steadily increasing. Do these facts go to show that the "little" interest which Swami Vivekananda created in America disappeared long ago ? Or rather do they not, on the other hand, prove beyond doubt that the interest has been kept up and even increased by the monks of the Swami's Order with the hearty co-operation of his American followers and admirers ?

#### THE SWAMI'S EXPOSITION—LUCID AND SCHOLARLY

It is an unquestionable fact that Swami Vivekananda came in close touch with and greatly impressed many "scholars and philosophers" whose opinions the *Modern Review* cannot possibly set aside. Dr. J. H. Wright, Professor of Greek in the Harvard University, was so deeply impressed with the great learning of the Swami that he wrote about him to his friend, the Chairman of the Committee for selecting delegates to the Parliament of Religions—"Here is a man who is more learned than all our learned professors put together." Prof. William James, the leading American psychologist and philosopher, was greatly influenced by the "Master's" learned and inspiring exposition of Hindu philosophy and cherished a great admiration for the "paragon of Vedantist missionaries." Prof. Josiah Royce, the Harvard Professor of Philosophy, who too was deeply influenced by the Swami's profound

teachings, frankly admitted his debt to him. Dr. Lewis G. Janes, President of the Brooklyn Ethical Association, was also struck with the Swami's erudition and masterly treatment of religion and philosophy and became his life-long admirer and friend.

#### OPINIONS OF SCHOLARS AND PHILOSOPHERS

The Swami left a deep impression in the "intellectual circles" wherever he went. He spoke before Ethical Associations, Metaphysical and other intellectual societies. He lectured before the graduate students of the Philosophical Department of the Harvard University—"one of the foremost intellectual bodies in the world." His profound but lucid interpretation of the Vedanta Philosophy drew so great an admiration from both the professors and students that he was offered a chair of Eastern Philosophy in that celebrated university, which, however, as a sannyasin, he could not accept. The Rev. C. C. Everett, D. D., L. L. D., Dean of the Harvard Divinity School, wrote in the Introduction to the pamphlet embodying this address—"This system (Vedanta) is not to be regarded merely as a curiosity, as a speculative vagary. . . . The reality of the One is the truth which the East may well teach us; and we owe a debt of gratitude to Vivekananda that he has taught this lesson so effectively." All these eminent men universally recognised as "scholars and philosophers" sent an address of greeting to the Swami when he came back to India, containing these remarkable passages—"As members of the Cambridge Conferences devoted to comparative study in Ethics, Philosophy and Religion, it gives us great pleasure to recognise the value of your *able expositions* of the Philosophy and Religion of Vedanta in America and the interest created thereby among *thinking people*. We believe such expositions as have been given by yourself and your co-labourer, the Swami Saradananda, *have more than mere speculative interest and utility,—that they are of great ethical value in cementing the ties of friendship and brotherhood between distant peoples, and in helping us to realise the solidarity of human relationships and interests which has been affirmed by all the great religions of the world.*" (Italics are ours)

Besides the "scholars and philosophers" already mentioned, Prof. Seth Low, President of the Columbia University, Prof. A. V. W. Jackson of the Columbia College, Prof. Thomas R. Price of the College of the City of New York, Professors Richard Botthiel and N. M. Bulter of the New York University, and many other intellectuals were interested in the Swami's work. Dr. Herschell A. Parker of the Columbia College became the President, and the Rev. Dr. R. Heber Newton and Charles R. Lanman, Professor of Sanskrit at the Harvard University, became honorary members of the New York Vedanta Society. Besides many University professors, a large number of prominent clergymen were also drawn towards the Swami, who, according to the "Unity," combined in himself "the learning of a University-president, the dignity of an archbishop, with the grace and winsomeness of a free natural child."

Space does not permit us to give in detail an idea of the deep impression which the Swami made on Professors Max Muller, Deussen and on M. Jules Blois, Mr. Hiram Maxim, Monsieur Loyson and other

prominent men of thought, some of whom were his personal friends. But what we have already said is, as we think, more than enough for our purpose. We now ask the *Modern Review*—Was not the Swami's exposition of the Indian Philosophy "scholarly" enough to satisfy a number of "scholars and philosophers"? And was it considered by them to have done in any way more harm than good to the cause of Indian Philosophy? We would like to know the opinions of other "scholars and philosophers," if any, holding a different view which made the *Modern Review* bold enough to make a sweeping statement which is as unhappy as it is wrong. For the sake of truth, let the *Modern Review* either publish documents, if it possesses any, in support of its assertion, or let it boldly retract the injudicious words which, we fear, it cannot substantiate by evidence.

#### THE SWAMI'S INTERPRETATION—MORE SPIRITUAL THAN SPECULATIVE

The Swami's exposition of the Vedanta was more of a highly moral and emotional rather than of a purely intellectual character. It included logical and philosophic forms, but was highly spiritual in its nature. Indeed, to him the Vedanta was more a path to Self-realisation than a system of intellectual speculation. And more than any other school of thought, he presented the Advaita Vedanta rightly called by Prof. James "the paragon of monistic systems". This he tried to do in the most lucid form possible. As he himself said—"The abstract Advaita must become living--poetic--in everyday life; out of hopelessly intricate mythology must come the most scientific and practical Psychology--and all this must be put into a form so that a child may grasp it. That is my work." The mission of the Swami was to democratise the highest spiritual thoughts of the Vedanta by bringing them within the reach of all, the learned and the unlearned alike. He furthered greatly the work begun by orientalists like Professors Max Muller, Deussen and others, not only by his lectures and writings, but also by his life embodying the sublimest ideals of the Vedanta. And being the first Hindu missionary who preached the message of the Vedanta to the West and attained phenomenal success, he also prepared the way for those who were to follow him later to spread Hindu ideals, religion and philosophy. Like all true Hindu philosophers Swami Vivekananda was a seer and philosopher in one. And from the Hindu "philosophic" standpoint, he was eminently fitted for fulfilling the mission of the Vedanta which he did in a unique manner combining high scholarship with wonderful lucidity in interpretation.

#### UNJUST CRITICISM BY THE MODERN REVIEW

The great object of Swami Vivekananda was to present to the West the grand philosophical synthesis underlying the numerous traditions and mythologies, creeds and dogmas of Hinduism. And whatever the *Modern Review* may think, by his masterly treatment of his subject, he convinced even many scholars and philosophers of the West of the great fact that India does possess a philosophy which is the rational aspect of religion, and also a religion which is the practical form of

philosophy. But the Swami had no time to write "any systematic treatise of Indian Philosophy". His mission lay elsewhere. To sit in judgment on him for not doing a thing that lay outside the scope of his mission, and to pass the verdict that by his "popular" exposition of the Vedanta Philosophy he has done more harm than good to the cause of Indian Philosophy is to be not only unjust but also captious to the extreme. Dr. Rabindranath Tagore may be said to be interpreting some of the highest ideals of Hindu Philosophy in more a poetic than a philosophic way. Sir J. C. Bose is also demonstrating "one phase of a permanent unity that bears with it all things,"—the fundamental idea of the Philosophy of the Upanishads—and this in a pre-eminently scientific rather than a speculative manner. Does not the *Modern Review* think that it will be puerile on the part of a critic to belittle the noble work that is being done by these great sons of India, and to blame them for not fulfilling a mission which is other than their own?

#### RELATION BETWEEN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

The *Modern Review* at first tells us that philosophy is the main-spring and basis of Indian culture. Here it seems to mean by philosophy intellectual speculation as distinct from religion. Its may be true of Western philosophy but certainly not of Indian philosophy—in which speculation loses its meaning without the spiritual background. Towards the end of the note the *Modern Review* speaks of India's philosophy and religious culture which may bring about world peace, universal friendship and world-good. What is the relation between this philosophy and religion? The *Modern Review* does not seem to have any clear conception of the point. Rather, it misunderstands the relation, and brings down Indian Philosophy from its high pedestal of spiritual realisation to the level of intellectual speculation. But according to the Hindu tradition, philosophy and religion fulfil each other. "In all other countries," observes Prof. Max Muller, "philosophy has railed at religion and religion has railed at philosophy. In India alone, the two have always worked together harmoniously, religion deriving its freedom from philosophy, philosophy gaining its spirituality from religion." The reason of this harmony is that Hindu philosophers were no mere speculators. They were primarily men of realisation who built grand structures of thought on the unassailable foundation of the Truth perceived through intuitive visions. And the glory of Indian philosophy lies in its being not a feat of speculation, but a path of Self-realisation.

#### THE CRITICISM REFUTED

It is the failure of the *Modern Review* to understand the central theme of Indian Philosophy that has led it to attach too great an importance to its speculative side to the neglect of its spiritual aspect. Had it been otherwise, it would not have taken a distorted view of the Swami's work in America and underrated his influence there and his service to the cause of Indian Philosophy. Presented only in a particular form, Indian Philosophy cannot appeal to all people. For persons of a "scholastic" bent of mind there is much need for a "scholastic" interpretation of Indian Philosophy as is being admirably done by

Professors Radhakrishnan and Das Gupta. But there is a still greater need for a "scholarly" yet popular exposition which can satisfy the spiritual hankering of the human soul that has no charm for "intellectualism" and "academic discipline concerned with concepts and the attainment of scientific knowledge". If the former interpretation does not in any way do more harm than good to the cause of Indian Philosophy, how can the latter? The reason why the *Modern Review* thinks that Swami Vivekananda's "popular" lectures have in a way done more harm than good to the cause of Indian Philosophy is beyond our comprehension, and is best known to itself. Indeed we are surprised to find in it a note which is confused in its thoughts, unsound in its arguments, self-contradictory in its statements, unbalanced in its judgment, undignified in its tone,—in short quite unworthy of the *Modern Review* of whose achievement in the field of Indian journalism we feel so proud.

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### THE HINDU-MOSLEM PROBLEM

Commenting on our note on the Hindu-Moslem tension, which appeared in the May issue of the *Vedanta Kesari*, the *Modern Review* writes in its August number :—"Regarding remedies for this national disease, the *Vedanta Kesari* does not think it easy to eradicate communalism by stimulating the feeling of 'Indian first, Hindu or Moslem after that' among the masses; for we are told 'only a few educated men of the country can' feel like this. On the other hand the *Vedanta Kesari* is of opinion that one can considerably mitigate the communal evil by making Hindus and Musalmans realise that their apparently different religions are really one in essentials. We do not see how this is going to be done without spreading proper education. And if one can educate religious fanatics to see the unity of the fundamental principles of Hinduism and Islam, why cannot one teach them to think themselves to be Indians first and followers of religions next? Philosophy is more difficult to teach than economics, sociology and politics, hence it would be harder to teach religious unity than national unity."

The *Modern Review* is of opinion that education and good education alone is the only remedy for our communal evils. This is exactly the remedy we also suggested in the concluding paragraph of our note, that was not quoted in the *Modern Review*. We wrote that ignorance and its offspring, bigotry and fanaticism, which breed the communal spirit can be removed only by "proper education". And for the spread of this education, we also said that we wanted truly religious and liberal-minded teachers who could place before the teeming millions of India the highest truths of their own religion as also of other faiths, which are one in their essentials. Thus the *Modern Review* is really at one with us on the point that "proper education" alone can solve the Hindu-Moslem problem. But there are differences, we fear, as to the nature of this "proper education".

The *Modern Review* holds that if the religious fanatic can be educated to think of religious unity, he can also be trained to think of national unity. Theoretically it may be so. But in actual practice there are many difficulties. And the greatest of them is that the religious instinct of the Indian masses is very strong. Our so-called illiterate brethren think more in terms of religion, of a refined type though it may not always be, than in terms of nationalism. And compared to their literate compatriots, they often understand more of what we meant by religion, which however the *Modern Review* is pleased to call philosophy, than economics, sociology and politics. As Swami Vivekananda has said, we can work under the law of least resistance, and the religious line is the line of least resistance, particularly in the case of the Indian masses. Besides, it is not enough merely to arrest the disease of communalism by temporary expedients, political or otherwise. It is to be cured radically. And this can be done by directing the religious sentiments along proper channels. The disease of communalism is a "religious" disease. And that is why we have suggested for its cure a sure "religious" remedy.

Whether we like it or not, we have to take things as they are, and suggest solutions based on actual facts. Bigotry and fanaticism which breed communal hatred are expressions of religious sentiments which are generally sincere but always misdirected. For good or bad, religion is an object of great concern to our simple-hearted masses. And their religious feelings cannot and should not be suppressed. To try to do so is to attempt to take the life of a patient in order to cure his disease. National unity we must have by all means. But we think that in a country like India inhabited by religious-minded peoples it cannot be achieved without trying to establish religious unity on a secure basis.

The repeated outbursts of the so-called "religious" animosity have created a dread for religion in the minds of many of our educated countrymen. And some even go so far as to suggest the divorce of religion from our collective, if not also individual, life. But we must not forget that it is false religion, which owes allegiance only to forms, that divides. On the other hand true religion, which values the essentials more than the non-essentials, can lead only to unity. Religion of the right sort does by no means stand in the way of national union. Nay, it spiritualises and strengthens the collective consciousness as it did in the case of the Sikh and Mahratta powers. India, we believe, is not going to develop the Western form of political nationalism. Her nationalism, as we see it, is going to be the expression of her spiritual idealism.

The true spirit of religion in India is universal. We have to imbibe this universal spirit, however difficult it may be. And when we do that we shall see that we can be Hindus or Mohammedans and at the same time also Indian—that is, children of India—our common motherland. We may be charged with talking "philosophy". But we cannot help it. We hold that this "philosophy" is the product of the genius of the Indian people. And the more we try to understand and spread this "philosophy," the better for ourselves and the country.



## NEWS AND REPORTS

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION FLOOD RELIEF WORK IN MIDNAPORE, BENGL

On account of very heavy flood in the district of Midnapore, the poor people of Contai, Tamluk and Sabong Thanas are suffering from acute distress. Most of the houses have collapsed and the rest are in a tottering condition. Hundreds of men, women and children are starving. Carcasses and thatched huts are seen floating at many places. All means of communication have been cut off. Even boats are not available for going into the interior of the villages for the purpose of giving relief. The Ramakrishna Mission has sent three batches of workers to the flood-affected Thanas. They have already opened relief centres at Contai, Dasgram and Tamluk, and with much difficulty are penetrating into the interior of the affected areas. At Dasgram they have already made the first distribution of rice. To Tamluk and Contai they have sent rice, Chira (flattened rice) and condensed milk for infants. The innumerable and urgent letters and telegrams that are pouring in every day show that the situation is very serious and delay in relief may involve more acute suffering to the people, which may even result in loss of life. The generous public are requested to send their contributions which will be thankfully received and acknowledged by

THE PRESIDENT, RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, BELUR, HOWRAH.

THE SECRETARY, RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, 1, MUKHERJEE LANE, BAGHBAZAR, CALCUTTA.

#### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION : A DECLARATION

We have received the following for publication :--

For some time past, we have been receiving various queries, oral as well as written, both from our friends and from the public, regarding the relation of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society founded by Swami Abhedananda in Calcutta and Darjeeling, with the Ramakrishna Mission which has its Headquarters at Belur in the District of Howrah. We have also been informed that some time ago persons wishing to help the Ramakrishna Mission proposed to offer donations to the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society, or co-operated with it in other ways under the mistaken impression that it is a Branch of the Ramakrishna Mission. Moreover, complaints have reached us from some of our sympathisers who, working under the same impression, make the Ramakrishna Mission responsible for the ways and doings of the above institution. We understand that this misconception arises from the fact that the Vedanta Society bears the name of Ramakrishna and that Swami Abhedananda is a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, a trustee of the Ramakrishna Math and an ex-Vice-President of the Mission.

As it is our bounden duty to clear up the confusion and the false notions created in the public mind, we beg to inform our countrymen, as we did once before, that the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society with its branches is an independent organisation and has absolutely no connection

whatsoever with the Ramakrishna Mission which has its Headquarters at Belur in the Howrah District.

In this connection we would like to draw the attention of the public also to the fact that the Ramakrishna Sangha of Calcutta and Dakshineswar is another independent institution which is, in no way, connected with the Ramakrishna Mission.

SARADANANDA,  
*Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission.*

#### THE SIXTY-THIRD BIRTHDAY OF SRIMAT

##### SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

The sixty-third birthday anniversary of Srimat Swami Ramakrishnananda, the founder of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission Branch in Madras, fell on Friday the 6th of August. It was celebrated in a befitting manner at the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, in the morning and at the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home in the evening. A big-sized photo of the revered Swami was tastefully decorated and the celebration began with devotional music and chanting of hymns. Many of the Swami's admirers and devotees took part in the celebration. In the evening they participated in the function at the Students' Home where a meeting was held under the presidency of Swami Yatiswarananda. Mr. P. Manickyaswami Mudaliar, Mr. S. Raghavachariar and Rao Bahadur C. Ramanujachariar spoke feelingly on the life and ideals of the revered Swami. Swami Yatiswarananda brought the meeting to a close by dealing with the Swami's teachings and mentioning how his life was a long and uninterrupted Sadhana and served as a source of inspiration for selfless service. He hoped that the students and others present would enshrine in their hearts the high ideals of the revered Swami, of which the institutions of the Mission in Madras were eloquent monuments. The functions at both the Math and the Home ended with the distribution of Prasad.

#### THE HINDU TEMPLE, SAN FRANCISCO

During June, Swami Prakashananda held the summer Yoga classes at the Shanti Ashrama as usual. About twenty-five students joined the classes this year. Keen interest is being evinced in the teachings of the Vedanta and in the living of a practical spiritual life in the quiet and elevating atmosphere of the Ashrama. Some of the students came from very distant places such as St. Louis and other cities thousands of miles away.

On the first two Sundays in June, the services at the Hindu Temple were conducted by Mr. Brown in the absence of Swami Prakashananda, and on the last two Sundays by Swami Prabhavananda. Mr. Brown spoke on the "Conquest of Fear" and "Who deserves Immortality," and Swami Prabhavananda on the "Fulness of Life" and "Reincarnation and immortality."

Swami Dayananda who recently went from India to assist Swami Prakashananda in San Francisco has commenced giving discourses on the Bhagavad-Gita every Tuesday evening at the Hindu Temple. He has impressed all those with whom he has come into contact by his sweet disposition and amiable nature.

## ANANDA ASHRAMA, LA CRESCENTA

A reception was held at the Ashrama Community House on Tuesday, the 22nd June. Swami Paramananda took this opportunity to greet his friends and to present to them Swami Akhilananda who was accorded a warm welcome. Swami Akhilananda thanked those present in earnest words which were highly appreciated.

Owing to insistent demands from Boston, Cincinnati and other places, Swami Paramananda left La Crescenta for the Eastern states of America on June 29th. He was expected to be back in California before the first of August. During his absence the services and classes at the Ashrama were being conducted by Swami Akhilananda and Sister Daya.

## PASSING AWAY OF MISS S. E. WALDO

It is with great sorrow that we record the passing away of Miss S. E. Waldo—one of Swami Vivekananda's foremost American disciples—after five days' illness at Brooklyn on the 15th July last. Sister Haridasi, for that was the name by which this high-souled lady was known among the Swami's devotees, served her Master with unremitting devotion since the very early days of his mission in America. It was to her that the Swami dictated the Raja Yoga including the translation and commentary of the Sutras of Patanjali. And upon her he conferred spiritual powers and authority, saying that she alone, of all others, was best able to teach the practice and philosophy of the Raja Yoga.

A lady of remarkable literary powers, Miss Waldo prepared all the Swami's American publications for the Press. So great was the confidence the Swami had in her ability that he would pass the typewritten transcription of his lectures to her with the instruction to do with them as she thought best. She was one of the blessed group of disciples who sat at the feet of the Swami at the Thousand Island Park. And it was to Miss Waldo that we are indebted for the Inspired Talks—an invaluable book published by the Ramakrishna Math, Madras—which embodies the Swami's wonderful teachings as also his illuminating conversations on the various Hindu scriptures—the Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads, Vedanta Sutras, Bhakti Sutras of Narada, Avadhuta Gita, etc. Till her last days Miss Waldo tried to further the cause of her Master in various ways that lay in her power. May her soul rest in peace !

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# THE VEDANTA KESARI

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want

And the first step in getting strength is to uphold

'The Upanishads and believe that 'I am the Atman.'"

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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## PRAYER

त्वं ब्रह्म परमं त्वाम निरीदो निरहंकृतिः ।

निर्गुणश्च निराकारः साकारस्सगुणस्स्वयम् ॥

साक्षिरूपश्च निर्लिप्तः परमात्मा निराकृतिः ।

प्रकृतिः पुरुषस्त्वं च कारणं च तयोः परम् ॥

सर्वशक्तीश्वरस्सर्वः सर्वशक्त्याश्रयस्सदा ।

त्वममीहः स्वयंज्योतिः सर्वानन्दस्सनातनः ॥

○ Lord, Thou art Brahman, the Highest Goal, without desire and without egotism. Thou art without attributes and without forms, yet hast Thou forms and attributes.

Thou art the Supreme Being, the Witness, unattached to anything, and formless. Thou art Prakriti (Primal Matter) and Purusha (Soul), yet Thou art the Primary Cause of the two.

Thou art everything. Thou art the controller of all power. Thou art the source of all power too. Thou art void of all desires. Thou art the Self-luminous, All-blissful and Eternal Being.

SRIMAD-BHAGAVATAM.

## SPIRITUAL TALKS WITH SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

[The Swami—who was looked upon by Sri Ramakrishna as his “spiritual son” and was the late President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission—visited Benares in January, 1921. Notes of some of his inspiring conversations held there were taken down by a monastic member in Bengali. They are presented here in translation to our readers.]

THE SWAMI—Well, how are you going on with your spiritual practices ?

S—Maharaj, I do not find enough time for it. There is too much of work to do.

THE SWAMI—It is a mistake to think that Sadhana (spiritual disciplines) cannot be practised for want of time. The real cause, however, is the restlessness of the mind.

Work and worship must go hand in hand. It is very good if one can devote oneself solely to spiritual practices. But how many can do it ? Two types of men can sit still doing nothing. One is the idiot, who is too dull to work his brain, and somehow carries on his earthly existence. The other is the saint who has gone beyond all activity. As the Gita says,—‘Without performing work none can reach worklessness.’ One can attain to knowledge only by passing through the discipline of work. As we see, even those who give up work and lead a retired life have to spend a good deal of their time in putting up thatches, cooking food and doing other things.

Instead of working for yourself, work for the sake of the Lord. Know that all works that you have to do are Sri Ramakrishna’s and Swami Vivekananda’s. If you can work with this idea in view, your work will not bind you. On the other hand, it will improve you in every way, spiritually, morally, intellectually and also physically. Offer your body

and soul at the feet of these great teachers. Give yourself up wholly to them,—be their servant and tell them—“Here I give you my body, soul and all I have. Do with them as you please; I am ever ready to serve you to the best of my power, however limited it may be.” If you can do this, the responsibility of your spiritual welfare rests with them. You need not bother about yourself any more. But you should resign yourself in the right spirit. You shouldn’t do it with a doubting heart, “taking the name of God and at the same time keeping your clothes untouched by water\*.”

We led a wandering life for five or six years and then set ourselves to work. Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) called me aside and said, “There is nothing in the wandering life. Work for the sake of the Lord.” We did various kinds of work, but I don’t think it did us any harm. Rather, it did us great good. But we had strong faith in Swamiji’s words. I tell you,—you must have infinite faith in these two great souls,—Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji,—and work for their cause. Don’t be afraid. Keep your faith firm. Hereafter many will try to shake your faith by saying—“The work you have taken up has nothing to do with Sri Ramakrishna or

\*The reference is to Sri Ramakrishna’s parable of the milkmaid and the Brahmin priest. A milk-maid used to supply milk to a Brahmin priest living on the other side of a river. Owing to the irregularities of boat service, she could not supply him with milk punctually everyday. Once being rebuked for her delay, the poor woman said; “What can I do, Sir? I have to wait a long time for the boatman?” The priest said—“Woman! people cross the ocean of life by uttering the name of God, and canst thou not cross this little river?” The simple-hearted woman believed the priest. And from the next day forward, she began to cross the river by following the easy means of uttering God’s name and supply the milk early in the morning. One day the priest asked her why she was never late as before. The woman replied—“I cross the river by uttering the name of the Lord as you bade me do, and don’t wait for the boatman.” The priest could not believe this, and wanted to see himself how the woman crossed the river. The woman took him with her and began to walk over the water repeating the name of the Lord. But looking behind, she saw the sad plight of the priest and said, “How is it, sir, you are uttering the name of the Lord, but at the same time you are trying to keep your clothes untouched by water? You do not fully rely on the Lord.” Complete resignation and absolute faith in God are at the root of all miracles.

Swamiji. " But never pay heed to them. Even if the whole world stands against you, never give up what you have once believed to be true.

S—It is very difficult to devote oneself exclusively to spiritual disciplines. I tried but couldn't continue it for a long time.

THE SWAMI—Why do you think that you can't do it, because you failed once or twice? One has to try again and again. Sri Ramakrishna used to say,—“The new-born calf tries to stand up, but falls down many a time. It does not stop there. On the other hand, it tries again and again. And then at last it not only stands up but also learns even to run.” The mind gets a good training if one takes up some regular work at the beginning of one's spiritual life. Then the trained mind can be applied to meditation and other spiritual practices. The mind that is usually allowed to drift, will drift at the time of spiritual practices also.

To the spiritually advanced soul there comes a time when he wants to devote himself solely to meditation, prayer, etc. At that time work falls off from him by itself. This takes place when the mind awakens spiritually. Otherwise, even if one takes to a life of exclusive spiritual practice by a sheer effort of the will, one can go on only for a few days. And then comes monotony. Some even go mad by persisting in the course. Others follow the spiritual path in a haphazard way, and keep their mind busy with other things as well.

Great strength can be acquired through the practice of Brahmacharya. A true Brahmacharin can do the work of twenty-five men. In olden days, besides the practice of continence, Brahmacharya included Japa (repetition of the Lord's name), meditation, study of the scriptures, pilgrimage, association with holy men etc.

All men cannot know what is good for them. It is, therefore, that one has to keep the company of holy men. Here I give you full freedom. Let me see how long you

can follow the right path. Not long—not more than a few days only.

All troubles arise because the mind is not properly trained. There is no enemy more harmful than idle gossip. It ruins one completely. Unless one spends some time in solitude one cannot understand the workings of the mind and realise the truth. It is very difficult to grow spiritually along any particular line in the midst of tumult and confusion.

I give freedom to all. I want everybody to advance along his own line. But when I find that he is not able to do so, I come to his help.

It is good in every way to stay at a particular place and take up some form of service. You will feel uneasy if you stay here for a long time without doing any work useful to the institution. Others also may say the same thing. But if you render some form of service every day, you will feel all right in both mind and body.

During the days of our active life, we used to be in high spirits and keep excellent health too. I think, we used to feel much better then than now when we do not do any regular work. I tell you my innermost thoughts—what I actually feel.

I have now retired from active work. I speak of myself just by way of illustration. Some people think they, too, should do like me. Never entertain such a thought.

Eternal life is before you. What, if you devote a few lives to the cause of Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji? Even if it is a mistake to do so, let a few lives be spent in vain. But I tell you, it is not going to be so. Through the grace of Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji, you will see to what a great spiritual height you will soar like a rocket.

Do not lead an easy-going life any more. If you do that you won't be able to practise spiritual disciplines properly. Any work that you do, do with your whole



heart. This is the secret of work as Swamiji used to say. Set yourself to work. Now you are wanted to conduct a magazine. Why not do it by all means ? It is nothing to you—it is very easy for you.

Before you begin work, remember the Lord, and offer your salutations to Him. Do the same at intervals in the course of the work, and also after you finish it. Spend all your time in thinking of the life, teachings and commandments of Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji. Know in your heart of heart that the work you do is for the sake of Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji, and not for anybody else.

## EDITORIAL NOTES

### MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE EAST AND THE WEST

A great gulf, nay an ocean of misunderstanding separates the East from the West. The steamship and the railway, the cable and the wireless have greatly minimised the physical distance, but unfortunately they have not been able to lessen to the same extent the distance that lies between the Oriental and the Occidental in the domain of thought. Eastern ideals have not been preached in the West as much as they ought to have been. The Western Orientalists have no doubt rendered invaluable service to the cause of Asia by popularising her ideas and ideals through their translations of the Sacred Books of the East. But their noble work has been hampered to no small extent through the reckless misrepresentation of Oriental peoples and their culture by Christian missionary and other writers and speakers who know just enough to misunderstand and misrepresent. Occidental ideas have made great progress along with the western political domination and missionary enterprises in the East. But unfortunately the West has not been properly represented at her best. As a matter of fact, Western civilisation with its evils of aggression and exploitation of the "backward races" and its "politicised" Christianity contaminated by race prejudice and "religious imperialism" has almost convinced the Asiatics of its failure as a world-culture. In the East as in the West there

is a general prejudice against the alien. And as it often happens, this prejudice is confirmed by a false knowledge of the essentials of the two civilisations. That is why, in spite of close contact, people fail to know, nay they even misunderstand one another greatly. Speaking on the general British and Indian mentality an English writer observes: "The British are naturally and ineradicably conservative; they are prejudiced against bare feet, betel-chewing, and a hundred other customs that are second nature to the Oriental. On the other hand, the Indian is equally conservative on his side; he thinks the pocket handkerchief unnecessary, the cock-tail a folly, the foreign women an indecency and Western speed and efficiency totally undesirable." This reveals the opinion which the average Westerner and Asiatic hold about each other.

#### CAUSE OF THE MISUNDERSTANDING

The Occidental thinks the Oriental to be semi-civilised, superstitious, visionary and devoid of all initiative. The Oriental in his turn considers the European to be no better than a barbarian who holds the doctrine of "might is right," and who without any hesitation robs others of their land and wealth for satisfying his inordinate craving for power and sense-pleasure. The two races certainly seem to be wide apart from each other in the world of thought. It is no wonder that the "jingo" poet of England has said—"East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet." But fortunately for humanity this is not the whole truth. This is more or less the superficial view. The Westerner sees only the exterior, but not the inner glory of the Asiatic civilisations—their spirit of renunciation and conquest of inner nature, their practical ethics and religion. The Asiatic observes only the horrors of the Western civilisation but not its splendours—its indomitable spirit of work, conquest of external nature, its remarkable tendency ever to explore new fields of scientific knowledge. Each tries to judge the other from the wrong standpoint and by the wrong standard. This is the main cause of the great misunderstanding that divides the two mighty branches of the great human family.

#### THE TWO TYPES

"Not even the snowy barriers," says Mr. Okakura in his 'Ideals of the East,' "can interrupt for one moment the broad expanse of love for the Infinite and Universal, which is the

common thought-inheritance of every Asiatic race, enabling them to produce all the great religions of the world, and distinguishing them from the maritime peoples of the Mediterranean and the Baltic, who love to dwell on the Particular, and to search out the means, not the end, of Life." The Japanese author by making this observation very clearly points out the general traits of the Eastern and Western peoples. In spite of the biased opinions of superficial critics, it must be affirmed that the Asiatic possesses a naturally religious temperament, a quiet mood, a hankering for the realisation of the Infinite. He is practical in religious matters, and is very particular about his religious freedom. The Westerner, on the other hand, possesses an intensely active temperament, a great tenacity of purpose and an almost unquenchable thirst for material improvement. He is very practical in his affairs of the world, and loves political independence and scientific culture more than anything else. The trend of the Eastern and Western civilisations can be understood from the types of great men they respectively produce. Asia, following her ideal of sense control and Self-realisation, gives birth to spiritual giants. The West, occupied as she is with the conquest of external nature, produces giants in the field of science and politics. But the spiritual temperament of the East does not mean that every Asiatic is spiritual. On the other hand we find the religious mood sometimes lapsing into indolence, weakness and cowardice. Again, the active temperament of the "achieving" West does not necessarily imply that every Westerner is a scientist and politician, and is indifferent to spiritual culture. But as we find usually, the ideal of "activity and progress" breeds the unholy spirit of militarism and aggression leading to the unrest of the soul. How to remedy the defects and keep intact the good features of each type—is the great problem before the world to-day.

#### SYNTHESIS OF THE TWO TYPES

Whether in the East or in the West, the crying need is the combination of the essential features of the two types,—of spirituality and activity. As Swami Vivekananda observes:—"Each of these types has its grandeur. The present adjustment will be the harmonising, the mingling of the two ideals. The Oriental idea is as necessary for the progress of the human race as is the Occidental, and I think the more necessary." If the serene mood is to be prevented from degenerating into inertness and passivity, the active temperament too must not

be allowed to develop the spirit of militarism and aggression. This can be done by combining idealism with practicality, meditation with activity, and spirituality with scientific and political knowledge. The assimilation of mutual ideals does not, however, mean any lifeless uniformity, nor the suppression of the individuality of any. Asia is not to become another Europe, nor Europe another Asia. Each must realise her own true soul and fulfil herself by assimilating what is best in the other. Each must develop in her own way a particular phase of humanity and supplement the other. Each must stand on her own strength, and that in a spirit of fellowship and harmony. There will then dawn upon the world a new age when the East will meet the West, and men will sing with the poet—

“There is neither East nor West  
Border, creed nor birth,  
When two strong men stand face to face,  
Though they come from the ends of the earth.”

#### EXCHANGE AND ASSIMILATION OF MUTUAL IDEALS

There are, however, great obstacles in the way of this cultural synthesis. There is a very thick mass of ignorance that is to be cleared before the union may be brought about. The Asiatics as a whole are becoming alive to the need of assimilating the scientific culture of the West. But very few among them are feeling the necessity of spreading the ideals of the East in the West. “Give and take” is the law of life. And no individual or nation can ever prosper in life without following the law. Besides, the union of the East and the West, which is so indispensable for the well-being of humanity, can never take place unless both stand on a footing of equality. Each must stand on her own strength and teach and learn from the other. That is why Swami Vivekananda asked his countrymen to preach abroad the great truths of the Eternal Religion of India—“You go to England, but that is also in the garb of a beggar—praying for education. Why! Have you nothing to give them? . . . . From time immemorial India has been the mine of ideas precious to human society; giving birth to high ideas herself, she has freely distributed them broadcast over the whole world. . . . Give those invaluable gems in exchange for what you receive from them.” The Westerners are no doubt trying their best to propagate their culture all over the world. But most of them think in their vanity and pride that they have little to learn from the East.

The dreadful lessons of the great war have not been enough to open their eyes. Some more terrible calamity seems to be necessary to bring them to their senses. But in spite of this sense of self-sufficiency, the soul of the West is restless.

#### YEARNING FOR A NEW ORDER

"The chief impression," said Rabindranath Tagore in a recent interview in England, "which Europe left on me was one of unhappiness and unrest. Everywhere there were strife and suspicion. . . . For the first time in several centuries, Englishmen are dissatisfied with themselves and the world in which they live. That is an amazing thing and a new thing." Indeed a deep discontent is raging in the soul of the West. There is a sincere hankering for a new order. The Occidental has become dissatisfied with his Christianity. As a thoughtful writer says in the *Open Court*—"It does not satisfy. While he has grown, the church has remained static." Many sincere men and women of the West are now turning to India for a higher ideal of life than that which has brought them to the brink of ruin. Even some of the leaders of philosophic thought in Germany are anxious to acquire that "wisdom" which the Orient still preserves in spite of her downfall, "that poise and repose, that inner self-control and simplicity" which the Westerners have lost because of "the disintegrating influence of an extreme intellectualism." The fact that Rabindranath Tagore has a larger circle of readers than any living author in Europe shows that the West is slowly coming to admire the spiritual culture of India. The widespread appreciation of Mahatma Gandhi indicates that there is a large number of men and women in the West, who find a sure cure for militarism in the Indian doctrine of Ahimsa (non-violence). This remedy for man's political troubles is, to quote the words of an eminent American publicist, "the most effective that human genius could invent." Anyway, there is no doubt that many thoughtful Westerners are coming to assume towards the Hindu ideals a humbler and truer attitude so very essential for the realisation of the unity of mankind.

#### THE BASIS OF UNION

But what should be the basis of this synthesis? The cultural union of the East and the West can be securely established only on the universal ideals of Religion. Missionaries of creedal religions have been tirelessly pleading for the

acceptance of their respective "universal religions". Each of these religions is, in the words of Arabinda Ghose, "a system, a thing of creed and intellectual belief," and "has failed and deserved to fail because there can be no universal religious system." The hope of the future lies in "a spiritual religion of humanity"—which brings to man the message of the Infinite and the Universal pervading the finite and the individual. The world and particularly the West is gradually being drawn towards the Vedantic ideal of the One which gives meaning to the manifold. As many highly intellectual men and women of America frankly acknowledged, the message of Unity, which was very effectively proclaimed by Swami Vivekananda both in the East and the West, "has great ethical value in cementing the ties of friendship and brotherhood between distant peoples, and in helping us to realise the solidarity of human relationship and interest which has been affirmed by all the great religions of the world." What is needed most in the West are missionaries of this Universal Religion, to whom the One is a matter not of speculation but of realisation, and who by their spiritual touch can teach people the higher ideals of life. We also want in Asia Western teachers of the right type, who would combine great love and sympathy with their scientific and political knowledge. The Asiatic needs the services of his Western brother in order to improve his economic and political condition, and fight more efficiently the battle of life. Our modern world urgently wants innumerable workers, Eastern and Western, who by their selfless service can make the East and the West better understood, and can unite them by the bond of culture which would be scientific in form but spiritual in substance. But where are the workers? And when, again, are they going to take up their labour of love?

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"Stand on your own feet, and assimilate what you can; but learn from every nation, take what is of use to you, but remember that as Hindus everything also must be subordinated to our national ideals."

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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## THE LIGHT OF ASIA

BY PROF. A. R. WADIA, B.A., BAR-AT-LAW.

*(Concluded from page 145)*

**I**N the famous eight-fold path Lord Buddha initiates, he emphasizes, first of all, the Right Views, Right Aspirations, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Mode of Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Rapture (self-concentration). In this path he recognises again the one great distinction between the message as he developed it and the message of Hinduism as it was practised at that time.—I do not refer to the great Upanishads here, which, of course, realized the grave truth such as Buddha did realize, but to the ordinary Hinduism whose belief was that sin could be washed out in a river: whatever wrongs they might do, they could ward off their effects by sacrifice and prayers. Buddha would have none of these things. He insisted on the right action—not merely the action which resulted instantly in achieving some good but the action which was permeated through and through with genuine morality and love for humanity. He emphasized such actions and such a morality.

In this eight-fold path, he again distinguished the first stage, the stage of conversion during which what he called the three fetters have to be overcome. The first of these fetters was the delusion of self, the idea that this self is an individual separate entity whose salvation could be secured by itself instead of realizing that this individual self is a mere dream and a delusion and that this self is a part and parcel of the great soul of humanity. He realized and he felt that before a man could love others as himself and no less than himself, he must first of all be convinced that his narrow self is not the real self, that this narrow self has to be overcome, conquered and spiritualized.

The second fetter was the fetter of doubt—doubt as regards the efficacy of the teaching of the Enlightened. It is not a mere abstract statement which says that faith moves mountains. Students of recent psychology will appreciate the fact that faith has got some tremendous power in it and it is this faith that he emphasized.

The third fetter was the belief in the efficacy of rituals and mere outward observances. Every man to be truly converted to the Buddhistic mode of life had to feel that he must work out his salvation through himself and from within—not merely from without.

In the second stage, or the path of those who return, and in the third stage or the path of those who never return to us—two more fetters have to be overcome and those fetters are the fetters of sensuality and of ill-will. He again and again emphasized the oneness of humanity and therefore it was not possible for one soul to bear ill-will to another from his standpoint. If I bear ill-will to another person, I consider him to be some one alien to me—some one apart from me. The essence of Buddhism was to make one and all feel the oneness of humanity and therefore, ill-will or even the very possibility of ill-will must be overcome.

In the fourth stage and the last one, the path of redemption, all the remaining fetters have to be broken—the spiritual pride, the desire for separate individualized life, even though that individualized life be by itself in a glorious heaven or paradise, has to be quelled. What is the use of a man attaining spirituality if he feels that he is superior to other beings, if he feels that other beings are lower than himself and that he can ride rough-shod over their desires and their needs? Here comes the supreme humility of the great Master who having attained enlightenment himself does not arrogate to himself the whole efficacy of that enlightenment. He is prepared through the uncontrollable love that filled his heart, to let the lowliest share that enlightenment. What is the worth of spiritual pride of a person if he cannot share his spirituality with others?

And lastly comes the sense of self-righteousness and dignity. Here, I think, is perhaps the highest point which Buddhism attains and in that highest, the Upanishadic teaching and the Buddhistic teaching meet. The Upanishadic seers may have expressed their thoughts in their own words—in the vehicle that suited them most, and Buddha may have expressed his teaching in a mode which suited him and his aspirations.

But if truth be one, it is the same whether propounded in the East or the West, whether propounded 2000 years ago, to-day, or 2000 years hence. But since the Upanishadic seers were intellectual giants, how could we expect the ordinary



mortals to follow the intricacies of the Upanishadic teaching when they are differently interpreted even by the greatest philosophers of India? Buddha wanted to avoid that danger. He preferred to avoid metaphysics. All that he did care for was that the message he had to teach should be communicated to others and should be intelligible. It was in that sense that he taught Nirvana as the ultimate goal of life.

People who know nothing of Buddha know at least that he aimed at Nirvana and unfortunately they interpret that Nirvana as pure extinction. I believe it is fashionable even for philosophers to show that Nirvana could mean nothing else but extinction. But Buddha was too positive a thinker to rest content with mere negations. In fact, this misunderstanding took place even in his own life-time. It was his fate to have been misunderstood and he once complained bitterly, "Teaching this, explaining this, I am falsely, without reason, wrongly, not truthfully accused by some. . . . . 'an unbeliever is the Gotama, the real entity's destruction, annihilation, dying away is what he preaches.' What I am not, what is not my doctrine, that I am accused of."

Buddha said: "What is not my doctrine, that I am accused of." I think a sentence like that is a sufficient answer to those people whose intellectual subtlety revels in showing what Buddha was not. They may go to the later authors and they may convict the later Buddhistic writers of all sorts of beliefs, because the later Buddhists did not keep true to the spirit of their Master. The Master's teaching was for the masses and his followers wanted to evolve a doctrine—a sort of metaphysical doctrine—and in developing that doctrine, they forgot the needs of the masses. No wonder if nemesis overtook them and in their own mis-conceived and ill-judged efforts, succeeding generations came to couple the holy name of Buddha with a belief so lifeless and so uninspiring to human aspirations as that of mere atheism or mere agnosticism.

The question may fairly be raised—If Buddha had this positive conception in him, how was this misunderstanding possible at all? The answer is that Buddha was not interested in metaphysics. He had his own teaching—his own faith if you like to call it—his own background for his mode of teaching. But he felt, as every other prophet and every other philosopher has felt, the impossibility of manifesting the inward strength of that belief in words which could carry conviction to one and all. We have got an interesting story of

Vacchagota, a mendicant. When the mendicant came to enquire of Buddha whether the Ego is or is not, the latter observed a rigid silence. When the mendicant had gone away, one of Buddha's disciples asked him why he had not replied, since his silence might be taken as a weakness. Buddha answered : "What to answer ? Whatever answer I might have given could have been misunderstood." Buddha felt how the simplest words, simplest answers could be manipulated to mean a hundred different things. So he thought it safer not to answer at all. We can appreciate this because he felt what so many others have felt that there are truths which cannot be adequately expressed in words. As Edmond Holmes puts it : "When thought fails, words can do nothing but perplex and mislead."

Now we come to the most interesting and important point—Buddha's special emphasis on Love. Even the Christian missionaries of the present generation, at least those who have made a sympathetic study of other religions and Buddhism in particular, have come to realize that this emphasis on Love was not the monopoly of Christ or his followers, that this Love was preached 500 years before Christ was ever dreamt of. "We reach the immortal path only by acts of kindness: we perfect our souls only by Love." "That which is most needed is a loving heart." "Not by hatred is hatred appeased. Hatred is appeased by non-hatred. This is the Eternal Law." And this is illustrated by the story of the Ogress Kali, where in an interesting way he points out how hatred leads to evil desires of the heart, how these evils find themselves fulfilled in the next birth and this goes on till there is absolutely no egress out of it. That was the great emphasis, that was the spirit which made Buddhism what it was, particularly in the days of the great king Asoka. It is in that connection, that is in connection with the doctrine of love that we come across his conception of Ahimsa—not merely caring for the sanctity of life as such, but the motives that permeate that sanctity. And Buddha was the one person more than others that realised these motives. "Anger, drunkenness, deception, envy, these constitute uncleanness, not eating flesh." If a man refrains from eating flesh, it may be a symbol of his own spiritual development. By itself, it cannot stand for morality; it cannot make amends for the deceitfulness of a vegetarian's life. Here again we come across the emphasis on pure morality which was the characteristic of Buddhism.

All this teaching was proclaimed to the world 2,500 years ago and I have been merely repeating it to refresh our memory and to gain some inspiration. If you permit me, may I just spend a few minutes more on pointing out the effect of such teaching. The first magnificent effect of that teaching is to be seen in the personality of perhaps the most spiritual of Kings and Emperors—Asoka. We know how he was a conqueror and how the havoc that was done in the wars caused a revulsion in him and how he repented for his military activities and became a follower of Buddha ; how he put all the wide resources of his great Empire at the disposal of this great religion ; how he sent missionaries to the most distant lands and converted the people of these lands. Not merely that ; but for the benefit of succeeding generations, he also had his edicts carved on rocks and pillars which even to-day constitute perhaps the most spiritual contribution of India to the historical records of the world. In the edicts, we see a number of moral precepts. What he really emphasized was the law of piety and the real ceremonial of piety was not the recitation of prayers but essentially the kind treatment of slaves and the weak. And there is that edict which shows the magnificent spirit of toleration which was India's pride and privilege even two to three hundred years before Christ. Even in the 16th and 17th centuries, in Christian lands, there was an abominable religious persecution. But look at the message of Asoka : "His Majesty does reverence to men of all sects. . . . . by donations and other modes of reverence. . . . . A man should not reverence his own sect by disparaging that of another man for trivial reasons. . . . . The sects of other people deserve reverence. By respecting another's sect one exalts one's own sect. . . . . by acting contrariwise one hurts one's own sect . . . . . He who does reverence to his own while disparaging all other sects. . . . . in reality inflicts severe injury on his own sect."

Not merely this, but in the realm of arts, the effect of Buddhistic teaching was something splendid. Not the least important part of Christianity are the fine cathedrals with their beautiful paintings and carvings. In India too, the temples and caves of Ajanta which are Buddhistic are the manifestation of the artistic genius and the patient spirit of India, and that noble image of Buddha that has come down to us is still so impressive in character, and is so fully and exquisitely reflective of that supreme peace and love which filled his heart when he was alive.

Though Buddhism has been extinct in India now, at least during the time when it was prevalent, India knew and felt a sense of political unity without the grades of superiority and inferiority being fixed by the accident of birth. There was a genuine democratic feeling. Even to-day, in one great place in India, you find that characteristic of Buddhism. I refer to the famous temple of Jagannath at Puri. Within the bounds of that temple, there are even now no caste distinctions. All men are equal within the precincts of that temple. That is due to the fact that that temple was formerly the temple of Buddha. And even in these days of changed conditions, that fine cosmopolitanism has continued.

May I just linger a bit on the conversion of Ceylon, China, Burma and Siam and of the other foreign countries where Buddhism has been the dominant religion? Even to-day, I suppose it is a matter of guesswork whether the number of Christians is more or that of Buddhists is more; but they run shoulder to shoulder. Some of these great nations look up to India as the home, as the birthplace of their Prophet. They look up to India as the home of spirituality which has affected their lives and which has made them better citizens, —better citizens and men than they would ever otherwise have been. I need not emphasize the fact that the Master's teaching has not been kept at the same high pitch of purity because it is the misfortune of every great man that the purity of the original teaching is not kept up by his followers. Whether it is the case of Christianity or of Mahomedanism or of Buddhism, we have the same sad, sad story of petty-minded followers spoiling the purity of the original teachings of the Masters. Perhaps, Buddhism has suffered more in this respect than other religions. But we are met to-day not to celebrate Buddhism but to refresh our memories with the original, pure teachings of Buddha. Whatever may be the shortcomings of the followers, we cannot hold the Master himself responsible for that. For their shortcomings are not because of the great Teacher but they have been in spite of that great Teacher.

Before I take my seat, I shall briefly point out the importance of Buddha's original teaching for modern India. For in these democratic days we need most that catholicity of spirit which was India's most magnificent contribution to the peace of the world and to the progress of the human race. Buddhism was an offshoot of Hinduism. It was nurtured

on some of the basic conceptions of Hinduism. Through the kinship of spirit it is allied to the Upanishads. What Hinduism needs to-day is the vivifying touch of the esoteric teaching of the Vedanta or the democratic message of Lord Buddha—the Prince of Peace—the Light of Asia—that has become the Light of the World.

## THE DOCTRINE OF EXPERIENCE AS THE ONE SELF

### II. INTRODUCTORY (2)

*By Prof. K. Sundararama Aiyar, M. A.*

**T**HOUGH we have already made it clear in what sense the (Monistic) Doctrine of Experience is entitled to claim that it is alone founded on the Veda, we think it necessary also at the outset to state that there is a further special sense and significance which that statement bears in reference to the ultimate, supreme, and fundamental feature of that doctrine—viz., (1) that *Experience*—the one, absolute, innermost reality, Self or Atman—means and implies a realisation that is ever present, and always possible to us, *even while we are here*, however hidden it may be by the limiting conditions to which the living, roving, incarnating soul is subject owing to its primeval ignorance of the truth; (2) that this realisation (and all that it means) results from the well-known Maha-Vakyas (or Vedic sentences), the full significance of which will be dwelt upon later in its proper place in our exposition. It is this speciality of our doctrine—what is known as *Jivanmukti*, (or liberation from ignorance even while here) resulting from what is technically known as *Sabdaparoksha*, knowledge (of the innermost reality) resulting from the spoken sentence,—that gives a special justification for the (Monistic) Vedantin's claim that this Doctrine of Experience as the One Self is alone truly and ultimately founded on the Veda. Sankara says (*Svatmanirupanam*, Sloka 22)—“When all the objects perceived by the senses are stultified, then, from the *worldly* point of view (*lokatah*), we have the assurance that nothing else is known as existing (*siddha*) ; then (also) through the Veda, is known as existing (*vedatah-siddha*) that (existence or reality) without whose support (as the perceiving and witnessing Intelligence) nothing else (in the world) can exist.” When the Guru gives his final instruction through the Maha-Vakyas of the Upanishads to the prepared and qualified disciple, the

direct knowledge of the Atman (*i. e.*, Experience as the One Self, absolute and free from all the limitations of matter) is alone existent as the Real, Intelligent and Blissful, (*Sat-Chit-Ananda*).

It is this doctrine—or what seems an approach to it—that is referred to by the living British poet, Mr. Baurice Baring, in his little poem, "The Vale"—

"I have loved words which left the soul with wings,  
*Words that are windows to eternal things.*"

Another English poet seems to say something similar, but less suggestive of what we have in view—

"Breathe on Me, Breath of God,  
 Fill me with life anew,  
 That I may love what thou dost love,  
 And do what thou dost do."

It would be nearer to the truth if this latter poet had said—"that I may *be* what thou *art*." But his reference to "the Breath of God" as the source of the immediate and direct knowledge of what he does (or is) is what the Vedanta has in view. For, the Upanishads declare that "the Vedas are the Breath of God" (*Yasya nisvasito vedah*) and that they form the original and only source, not only of the world beyond the senses, but of the immediate realisation of the absolute and innermost Self, Reality, or Experience.

We may add here a few further remarks—though its full significance will become clear only after frequent repetition and deep meditation—to explain that, when it is said above that the Maha-Vakyas of the Upanishads *give rise* to the realisation of the Self as the One Reality, it does *not* contradict the fundamental fact (and idea) that the Experience (the One innermost Self as the Absolute or Reality) is *ever existing* as the intelligent witness, and cannot therefore be said to arise as an effect of the Guru's teaching of the Maha-Vakyas. If this latter conception is true, then, indeed, the Atman; Experience, or Reality (of the Vedanta) would be what is technically known as *Anyasesha* (a consequence of what has gone before, and therefore a knowledge dependent on, related to, and implied in, something else, and so not absolute and independent). The Atman—*i. e.*, Experience, Absolute, Noumenal, One—is really *agathartha*, unlike anything known before. It is not even knowable, for that implies a triplicity of knower, known, and knowledge. Still, the help of the Veda and of an Acharya is needed to remove the primeval veil

of matter (Ajnana) which bars from us the true self-effulgence of the Atman and has thereby brought our mind and senses into full operation so as to make us the slaves, willing or unwilling, of the experiences, painful or pleasurable, of the material world. The following passage from the great Vedantic teacher, Ramatirtha, may be quoted in this connection :—"The Veda is in itself a source of true knowledge regarding all matters of which it treats,—and, especially, regarding the realisation of (the true Self which is) the permanent and absolute entity desired by all (living) souls : and hence, it also reveals the means to such a realisation (which cannot be gained by sense-perception or the method of reasoning, etc.) to those who desire and seek them with all zealous effort. As this permanent and absolute object of desire is no other than Moksha (*i. e.*, deliverance from the life of wandering in the phenomenal universe), we see that the *real purport* of the Veda is to reveal the means to such deliverance." Various passages to this effect can be quoted from the Upanishads, but the following will suffice. "The One (Reality) to which all Vedas lead is that which is the Self of us all." "When that (Reality) is known thus, we pass beyond death,—and to gain this goal there is no other path."

To explain and illustrate how the Acharya effectuates his revelation of the Atman to his trained and qualified disciple by the use of the Vedic Maha-Vakyas, the Vedantin narrates the story of the *Ten Adult Simpletons*. They crossed a river, and then began counting their number to know if all had crossed. In so doing, each and every one omitted himself, and counted nine only. There was much bewailing and breaking of hearts among the whole party. A merciful bystander interposed and told the first person who again counted nine,—“the tenth is yourself.” When this sentence had been uttered, there at once came to him (and then to each of the others in his turn) the sudden flash of knowledge regarding the existence of his own self, formerly forgotten from simple ignorance. The analogy is clear, and need not be dwelt upon.

The supreme importance of the Veda (Vedanta) thus lies in the fact that it alone can reveal the Innermost Self, the Experience Absolute, the *Sat-Chit-Ananda* which transcends the entire phenomenal universe of matter—and also (reveal) the means to its revelation or realisation through the disappearance of that universe which is the effect of the evolution of primeval ignorance. The Veda also treats of various other important and related topics such as Creation, Karma,

Upasana, etc., all of which have their own values. But these values are all subordinate to the supreme value of liberation from the bondage of ignorance and the resulting life of mingled pleasures and pains in the material world of phenomena. When this freedom ensues, the veil of Maya is removed and we reach the goal of self-effulgence in the supreme reality and bliss of the Atman,—or Experience, one and absolute. Without creation, the entire living universe of souls (*jivas*) will be immersed in the ocean of oblivion which overwhelms all in the state of *pralaya* (destruction of all the forms of matter in manifestation) and in which none will be able to go through the activities which are necessary in order to accomplish the aims of life. It is by activity alone that man can live his physical and mental life on earth and fulfil his mission and purpose in the place there assigned to him according to his previous work and worth. Karma is intended (according to the Shastras which enjoin them) to produce the purity of mind which discards all purely worldly aims and desires which bind us to the life of births and re-births, never-ending and still-beginning, which keep us far from the blissful realisation of the One Self. Upasana (or the worship and meditation of a Deva, or even the supreme Personal God in the form of Vasudeva) is intended to produce,—through the eight-fold process of Yoga, or through any other prescribed form of Dhyana—the one-pointed (*ekagra*) condition of the mind through which alone the mind can reach the state of *laya* (dissolution) when the realisation of the self-effulgence of the Atman is reached as the ultimate goal of the Vedic teaching given by the Sad-Guru.

One last point must be mentioned before we close this introductory section. All the objections to this fundamental Indian doctrine of the supreme importance of the Veda (including Vedanta) as the one source of super-sensuous knowledge right up to the realisation of the supreme Atman have been met by the Rishi Jaimini (the author of the Purva-Mimamsa Sutras) and by other authors following in his wake down to the present day. It is beyond our present purpose to enter into details. We wish only to state here that there can be no true knowledge (*Prama*) without a recognised means (or instrument) of such knowledge (*Pramana*, as it is called). In India the three accepted Pramanas (instruments or sources of true knowledge) are (1) sense-perception ; (2) the process of reasoning, deductive or inductive, upon what is perceived by the senses so as to draw from it correct inferences and



thereby add to our knowledge : (3) direct verbal instruction from one who knows the truth regarding what we do not perceive by the senses or cannot gather as conclusions from premises through the established processes of reasoning. As regards this *third* source of knowledge,—technically known as *apta-vachana*—, any human being who plays the part of an *apta* may err from the effects of total ignorance (*apratipatti*) or of wrong apprehension (*anyatha-pratipatti*), etc. But the Veda—which is also a form of *apta-vachana*—has ever been regarded as the eternal, original, and beginningless source of all knowledge leading to the ultimate liberation (*Mukti*) of the living soul and its realisation of the innermost bliss of the supreme, noumenal Self or Atman. It is *ordinarily* held that not even Vasudeva, the one supreme Personal God, is the author of the Veda, but that he is only the revealer of it. It has ever been recognised on all hands that it has been transmitted by word of mouth from the supreme Lord Narayana Himself, and that even the Rishis—the *seers* (of the Veda)—revealed to their disciples what they had previously only heard by word of mouth from their own teachers in the lineal succession from the supreme God Himself and thereby had become part of the contents and furniture of their mind. The Veda is *also* regarded as eternal and beginningless (*anadi*), because Brahma,—the creator of the universe to whom it was first revealed by the supreme Narayana,—was enabled to perform his function of creating the world only with its aid. Hence it is older than even Brahma (the *first* divine personality among the three Hindu personal deities, collectively called Trimurti). Hence also it remains as eternal as the supreme Divine Person. Indeed, the Veda—as already stated above—claims to be the “ Breath of God,” and hence it is not to be regarded as different from his person. Hence, also, it is impossible to seek for a confirmation of its claims as a revelation from any other source. The only confirmation that is obtainable is the considered and conscientious avowal of those sages who have obtained the illumination—possible only to the perfected Yogi—which reveals, among the experiences of previous lives imprinted in the mind, those Vedic texts, which having been taught to such a Yogi by his own teacher in a previous incarnation, is recognised therein as part of its contents and furniture, then proclaimed as such to the world outside, and recognised and accepted as authoritative by other equally illumined seers and sages.

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## A RE-VALUATION OF PATRIOTIC IDEALS

*By K. N. Kasturi, M. A.*

THE Aryan conception of patriotism was neither an abstraction of the mind nor a fabrication of the intellect; it was a living consciousness permeating every endeavour and transmuting acts into offerings. Aryavarta (the land of the Aryans) was revered as a *Punyabhumi* (Holy Land) fertilised by sacred rivers, rich in herbs and food-stuffs, and sanctified by columns of sacrificial smoke and the dust of heroes' feet. This recognition of a protecting motherland demanding the service and sacrifice of her children was widened and intensified by the experience of pilgrimages and post-graduate peregrinations, the peopling of all beautiful spots with the gods of Nature's own primeval energies and the rules of the orders of wandering monks ensuring a vigorous circulation of *Bharatavarsha's* (India's) spiritual life-blood. The amazing prosperity of Ancient India and her success in colonisation and culture-conquest are undoubtedly the efflorescence of this strong patriotism, built on pride of race-heritage and love of soil. Then came the dark and impenetrable period of social and political unsettlement which drove that magic current underground or, at best, made it too local and narrow to offer a united front against the onslaughts of aggressive Islam. The Muslims of India, during their ascendancy and for long after, watched wistfully across the frontiers for help and guidance, too suspicious of the successes of an all-absorbent Indian culture. They thus contributed to scatter the virile race-consciousness, which had assailed them, among the Mahrattas and the Sikhs. The British aggravated the situation by the introduction of a wholly alien civilisation and the encouragement of a supercilious attitude among the English-educated classes in which criticism was sadly divorced from reason and admiration from discrimination. But the feeling of mortification roused in the minds of the Indians by the bombastic pride in the infallibility and indispensability of British rule and the repression of patriotic manifestations as savouring of sedition, and intensified by the advantages arising from the unprecedented assets of a common language, cheap and easy means of communication and common grievances have once more revived, though not in its pristine robustness, the popular consciousness of duties to the motherland. The nationalistic movements of social, economic,

political, and even religious reconstruction during the last half a century have contributed in a great measure to the enshrining of the motherland in the heart of every Indian requiring and receiving reverent homage from him.

The day has come when a re-valuation of our age-old sentiments has become necessary, when the question of developing the patriotism of millions of India's sons and directing it along healthy channels of activity has to be tackled by educationists and statesmen. Naturally, one has to meet at the outset the violent opposition of certain pseudo-humanitarians and ultra-cosmopolitans who denounce patriotism as but 'reflex egoism' and therefore undesirable. To Grant Allen it is 'a vulgar vice,' while Tolstoy stamps it 'as stupid and immoral.' In his pamphlet on 'Christianity and Patriotism,' Tolstoy says— "The so-called patriotism of our time is on the one hand a certain mood or frame of mind which is being constantly aroused in the people and maintained by school, religion and a venal press ; or, a temporary excitement aroused in the lower classes, who are both morally and intellectually inferior, by the ruling classes, and vaunted by them as the will of the people." But even Tolstoy is constrained to admit that patriotism can be a virtue when heterogeneous populations have to be welded into strong states or when a race, creed or institution has to be defended from barbarism.

Tolstoy and his friends are, therefore, up against the brainless and fraudulent clamour of earth-hungry wire-pullers, the derisive and dominant, the intolerant and aggressive patriotism, for example, of a Lord Milner. Lord Rosebury is once reported to have said, "We have to remember that it is part of our (British) responsibility and heritage to see that the world, so far as it can be moulded by us, should receive the Anglo-Saxon and not another character,"—a doctrine dangerously akin to the 'Kultur' of the German. And in spite of the illuminating lessons of the war, humanity is yet too grabbing to enlarge its instinctive patriotism into an innocent and inclusive sense of brotherhood. Signs are not wanting in our own land of the dangers of false or fanatic patriotism, born in hatred and bred on vulgar fear.

In reality, patriotism is a laudable and legitimate aspiration to preserve all that is good in the character and institutions of one's own nationality, a noble ambition that one's own country should do what is right towards others, should contribute her best to the general progress of humanity and keep

abreast of other countries in industry, invention, science and art. It is the secret spring of constructive activity, the silent energy behind every glorious act, every forward step. A patriot looks upon his nation as an instrument of service to humanity, as the source and inspiration of his ideal in life. The ideal is not a string of unintelligent words; it is made up of the flaming lives of a nation's heroes, those stalwart souls who built up, brick by brick, the organisation of which we are the parts. Hence, the guide and the standard of a patriot are those primary qualities that can be shared undiminished by all the peoples of the earth—Truth, Beauty, Charity—or, in the profoundest sense of the word, Religion itself. The sentiment of patriotism is in its essence spiritual and who can say, so far as spiritual qualities are concerned, that there is conflict between depth and expansion?

To keep this mighty force pure and sweet, constant emphasis has to be laid on certain fundamental aspects. As Mr. Wickham Steed wrote in the "Review of Reviews"—"If we refuse to understand what others think, if while remaining devotedly English or Scotch, we fail to perceive or make no effort to find out how other peoples feel within and without the British Commonwealth, we are denying ourselves the privilege of service. We cut ourselves off from the only source of superiority which the modern world instinctively recognises, superiority in opportunities for service and in the talent to use them." "Do not deny yourselves the privilege of service"—that is a call dear to India's heart, her own ancient ideal of Seva of the Virat (Service to God in all beings). What a magnificent idea to correct and control the blind and narrow patriotism of fanatics! Understand aright India's international activities and her role among the civilisers of humanity and derive confidence in her future and in the grandeur of her message. Each nation is a distinct contributor to the common good; it can become richer only by a more generous welcome of the co-operation, nay even the competition, of other countries in the spheres of Truth and Beauty. In the concert of nations, each country has a special note to strike, either political progress, social organisation, economic advancement or spiritual achievement. Our duty is to discover our true task and do it ungrudgingly, in humility and joy. True patriotism is this loyalty to the mission of each people. If this truth is realised, patriotism can never degenerate into exploitation and the battle-flags of all nations can be unfurled in the Parliament of Man and the Federation

of the World.. It will inspire dignity and self-confidence among the peoples of the earth and promote co-operation and good will. It will obviate the need for biased histories, praising or denouncing from partial view points. No longer will histories of India prepared by magistrates and educational bureaucrats satisfy the national mind. Indian history has yet to become wholly Indian. The intimate cultural exchanges of Ancient Asia have to be borne in the minds of our young men, as well as the mighty moral and spiritual forces that constituted, according to the nameless chronicles of our past, the real story of our land.

Again, contemporary events in India remind us of the necessity to emphasise on the steady, sober and life-long patriotism of a citizen in order to counteract the ignorant worship of triumphant mediocrities or enthroned success. Bosanquet presents the dying Socrates rejecting the proposal of his friends that he should escape from prison and evade the sentence of the law as a supreme example of this deeper patriotism. Our ancient lawgivers had the same idea in view when they dwell on the proud and responsible position held by the Grihastha (house-holder) in society. True patriotism, according to the modern philosopher, is the law-abiding spirit, the recognition that to fail in normal civic duty is, so far as in us lies, to make war upon and undo the society to which we belong. This sturdy sense of citizenship has to be earned by gifts of energy, sympathy and love to one's neighbours, for is it not a law of life that it is those who give most that get most ? The continual practice of this aspect of patriotism will divert the attention of men from the empty clap-trap of factious platforms into the thousand little acts of daily beneficence that really contribute to the sum of human happiness. for he too serves who simply stands and serves.

Nor does love of motherland require the feverish hiding of the faults and maladjustments of the national machinery—a universal justification of every act done by our countrymen. Let us boldly face all the complex problems of India's reconstruction. In her name shall we recognise, frankly and freely, our littleness, despite the murmurs of wounded pride. For, once confessed, these weaknesses no longer make us blush. seeing that in owning them, we disown them. Historical truth of this nature makes us sincerer to ourselves and the world.

Again, the various birds of prey and passage that alight on our shores have dinned into our ears the dangerous half-

truth that India is but a geographical division of the world, peopled by diverse races fortunately kept from each other's throats by the intervention of the British bayonet. Sir John Strachey begins a voluminous book on India with the remark that the first thing one has to note about India is that "there is no India at all"! Educators in India to-day have therefore a mighty obligation to fulfil,—the insistent emphasis on the fundamental organic unity of our motherland. As Sister Nivedita wrote—"To the Hindu of all provinces, his Motherland is a seat of holiness, the chosen home of righteousness, the land of seven sacred rivers, 'the place to which sooner or later must come all souls in quest of God'. To the son of Islam, her earth is the dust of his saints. She is the seal upon his greatest memories. Her villages are his home. In her fortune is his hope. In both, the nationalising consciousness is fresh and unexhausted." All the races and peoples of India have the same background of culture and feeling. "With all alike, love of home, pride of race, idealism of woman,—is a passion. With every one, devotion to India as India finds some characteristic expression." Let us remember the need for such unity in these stormy days when the angry waves of communalism are tearing asunder brother from brother. For, as Mr. Hydari proclaimed to the graduates of the Punjab University, "Unity has for long been the ideal of India. To-day it has become an absolute necessity if she is to revive, nay, if she is to survive as a nation."

Above all, let the children of India learn to maintain their rights and fulfil their heavy obligations with manly dignity and self-respect, with a view to realising enduring and inspiring ideals. Let them appreciate the invaluable spiritual culture that has been, and still is, India's unique contribution to the progress of man. Let them listen to the cry around them,—agonised, ever-insistent, ever-increasing—for a practical and profuse demonstration of the truth of that culture and that message. Let them divert their surging patriotism from the blind rush towards the jails or political rostrums to the quieter and more difficult Seva of the Daridra Narayanas and Moorkha Narayanas (Service of God in the poor and the ignorant) of their land. And thus, let their Matripuja (worship of the motherland) be a lifelong service of her children.

Patriotism, so intense and spiritual as this, can alone check that wild and fantastic greed for reform, that feverish pulling

down of age-old institutions, that cankerous alienism slowly eating into the vitals of our race. It alone will rejuvenate India by preserving her past through the tumults of the present for her future service to humanity.

### ADHIKARAVADA\*

*By Swami Iswarananda*

**T**HE institution of Chaturvarnyam or the four-fold caste has fulfilled the grand purpose of the conservation of Aryan culture, whatever be the other objects it might have served. The division of society into four specialised groups increased the efficiency in the discharge of the functions of each. And, besides, the exclusiveness of the different groups which grew up in course of time in the Aryan society, with restrictions in regard to intimate social intercourse such as marriage, dining, etc., led to the keeping up the level of culture—social, ethical and spiritual—to which each had attained, from being lowered by contact with a community of a different and lower culture.

Culture in its social, ethical and spiritual aspects, is to a great extent the product of environments, and in turn it influences the society also; and therefore, if there is any difference in the level or types of culture of two communities, the best way to preserve the type or maintain the level is not to have free intimate intercourse between the two as regards intermarriage and other social affairs. This does not mean that any society should allow any community within it to remain in a low state of culture. On the other hand it is the duty of the more cultured community to spread its own culture to the other and bring it up to its own level. But until this equality in the level of culture is actually attained, any free and intimate intercourse between the communities will lead to a lowering of the standard of culture of the higher one, and may in course of time, prove even destructive to the culture itself, though it may slightly raise the cultural level of the lower one. The Aryan preferred to conserve the highest culture by avoiding over-hasty democratisation. He wanted that the highest standard of culture must be kept up at least by a small minority, even if it could be done only by leaving others to be satisfied with a lower standard.

\*"The doctrine of fitness" to follow the graduated courses of social, moral and spiritual training in Hinduism.

The Aryan conceived of this world as a school where man has to learn and teach, where each Jiva (soul) has to rise higher and higher in evolution and help others also in this evolution. To him this world was not a messing house where all should subscribe equally for their ration, and sit round the same table, each getting an equal share. The Aryan divided society into different grades and classes, each representing a different stage of progress. His society was like a school. Each class having learned its lessons was to pass over to the next higher class. There was no compulsion to join the school, but if a man joined, he could have a class and a grade of teaching suited to his fitness. But the Greek conceived of social life and moulded it in a different way. They stood for the abolition of all privileges and grades in society ; all had equal rights and privileges and everyone was compelled to give his contribution to the greatness of the national life. This fundamental difference explains the variation in the form of the organisation of society by the Greek and the Aryan.

The present-day societies of Europe and America are organised after the Greek pattern, in so far as they claim to stand for equal rights for all people. But as regards the actual enjoyment of rights conceded by law, there is a great difference attained by different sections of society such as the capitalist, the middle class, and the labouring class. We find a similar difference in privileges in the later Hindu society, though it declared that the highest culture was for all people. Thus a yawning gulf came to separate the Brahmin and the low caste man in the actual enjoyment of its rights. There was no doubt a fundamental democratic principle guiding the caste system, though its working was slow and graduated. But the progressive realisation of this principle was many a time hampered and at last almost put a stop to, by the vitiation of the principle of Adhikaravada, just as in Western society, we find a breakdown of the democratic principle by the introduction of the invidious distinctions between class and class.

Adhikaravada in its first beginning was a sound principle. It simply declared, "if you want to learn multiplication, you must learn addition beforehand. Therefore, you should first of all join the lower class where addition is taught. Then and then only you will become an Adhikari, that is, one qualified for multiplication." This was perfectly sound, and so long as this principle was kept up in its purity, Hindu society was a mobile one. Many a community which qualified itself



by the actual realisation of the standard set before it, was given the next higher standard ; many others who disqualified themselves for some reason or other had to come down to a lower status in society.

Unfortunately, this Adhikaravada later on underwent a wrong interpretation in the hands of selfish individuals and groups and there came to be promulgated the most objectionable laws which have made Hindu society weak and degraded to-day. Adhikara thus came to be interpreted as *right* instead of *qualification* which was its first significance. Those communities which were at first held as not yet qualified for a certain privilege but could some day be qualified for it, were declared under the new interpretation as having no such right at all. Adhikaravada, in the hands of the early Aryans, conceded to every man the right to qualify, but the later interpretation deprived him of even this right. The result was that each community stood where it was and all progressive realisation of the ideal of the society came to a standstill. The Sudra remained a Sudra, and the Chandala (out-caste) remained a Chandala.

By sheer perseverance many communities in the past had forced their way up by the progressive realisation of the ideals. And many communities are doing it at present. What is wanted, therefore, is only a recognition of their right to qualify themselves for the higher status. The days of preventing others from acquiring even the highest Aryan culture is gone, gone for ever. All disfranchised communities have become conscious of their right as also of their power to claim the right. If the so-called Adhikaris or the classes now qualified for the higher culture would only give up their claim for exclusive rights, and remove the obstacles placed in the way of the cultural elevation of others, it will be neither grace nor mercy on their part, but they will only be doing the barest justice.

But all glory will be to those noble souls who will themselves come forward and take up the education of their "non-privileged" brethren in the ideals of Hindu culture, and help them in a sympathetic manner in their struggle to achieve those ideals, which they are already trying to do. This is, by no means, an extravagant demand from the privileged classes. It is merely asking them to do what is their bounden duty,—to push on the work of our ancient Rishis and Acharyas—and to realise, to the fullest extent, their ideal of cultural progress.

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## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### PROF. RADHAKRISHNAN'S EXPOSITION OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY AT OXFORD

Prof. Radhakrishnan has done an invaluable service to the cause of Indian philosophy by delivering the series of four "Upton lectures" at Oxford. His exposition of the principles of Hindu philosophy was masterly. The lectures were delivered with a command of the subject-matter and an attractive clearness and excellence of style which are characteristic also of his famous book—the History of Indian Philosophy. According to a report of the lectures published in the "Forward" of Calcutta, the Professor could make "even the most complex philosophical problem interesting to an audience of laymen" and "the lecture hall was not only crowded but many late comers had to go away disappointed."

In the first lecture, the learned Professor pointed out that the Hindu religion is experience and not dogma or belief in authority. God being Infinite, the experience of different men about Him differed from one another but these experiences were all more or less correct readings of the Infinite. The recognition of this fact made the Hindu broad and liberal in his outlook, and helped him to realise that man progresses not from error to truth but from lower truth to higher truth.

In his second lecture, Prof. Radhakrishnan dealt with the missionary character of Hinduism. The Brahmin, the Sufi and the Christian mystic, he said, do not differ vitally so far as experience is concerned. There was no need therefore for quarrelling about names and forms. The Hindu readily accepted the names and gods with which his culturally inferior neighbours were familiar but he clothed these old names and gods with new conceptions. This made for religious peace and harmony and avoided all persecution resulting from converting the whole world to one and the same religion.

The subject of the third lecture was the doctrine of Maya and the theory of Karma. The Professor said that Maya does not mean that the world is but an empty dream. It is a statement of fact that the world has an empirical reality for us but loses it when we attain the superconscious state. The lecturer also said that Karma is not fatalism but the law of action and reaction in life.

His fourth and last lecture was on caste. He frankly admitted the defects of the caste system as it now stands. But he pointed out that when the Hindus first settled in India, they had to deal with various peoples in different degrees of

culture and civilisation. They had therefore to face a racial and cultural problem. "They could pursue three different policies in their relation with their new neighbours. Firstly there was the policy of extermination. The Hindu rejected this policy not only as ruthless but also as wasteful. It may be reasonably asked what the world loses if a backward race like the Zulus is exterminated, but answered the Professor, the cultural possibilities of a race are always very difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain. No one denies to-day the immense contribution made by the English to the progress of the civilisation of the world. But what a sorry picture do we find of the ancestors of the same Englishmen in the pages of Julius Caesar! Would it not be a tremendous cultural loss to the world if the Romans exterminated the inhabitants of Britain? The second possible policy was that of subordination. But the aboriginal inhabitants of India were too numerous. So the Hindu followed a policy of racial reconciliation, and caste was the result of this policy of 'live and let live'. Racial intermarriage was out of the question as that would mean cultural annihilation for the numerically inferior Hindus."

All these lectures were very much appreciated as their subject matter was profoundly important and interesting. They presented what Dr. Jacks, the Editor of the Hibbert Journal, called "a wonderful picture of the vast hospitality of the Hindu mind"—of the unparalleled breadth of outlook and catholicity of the Hindus. Prof. Radhakrishnan deserves the congratulations of one and all interested in Hindu philosophy and culture for having so successfully represented it in a famous foreign University.

#### THE STUDENT MOVEMENT IN AMERICA

The modern undergraduate in America has begun to feel that he is a "self-conscious and independent personality." Long inarticulate and pliant to the will of his elders, he now demands autonomy in student matters. Nay, he is also anxious to have a hand in guiding the educational affairs of even his college.

President MacCracken of Vassar College is "one of the most understanding of observers among the college authorities," who is in actual touch with what is going on in student circles in America. In a very sympathetic article specially contributed to the *Sunday New York Times*, which a kind friend is sending us regularly, he says that the undergraduates are now demanding some control of the working day at the College, and are questioning not only the requirements of subjects, but also the methods of teaching.

"The time is soon coming," further observes the writer, "when innovations in the curriculum will not be imposed upon them without

conference, when they will retort with 'tu quoque' to the professor, 'if we study badly it is because we are taught badly,' 'if we have no intellectual enthusiasm it is because your teaching is mechanized,' 'if we despise research it is because of your own attitude towards it,' 'if some of your gentlemen with Ph. D.'s showed any real enthusiasm for research we might ourselves respect it more,' 'we know what an interesting lecture is as well as you do,' 'we know when a course is well taught as well as you do,' 'if we soldier on our job it is because you soldier on yours.' Those and other equally irreverent rejoinders are now being heard on the college campus. They constitute the real student movement in America to-day. To the present writer the movement seems wholly good if the professor recognises the situation in time."

This new spirit among students is unmistakably the sign of an intellectual enthusiasm which is beginning to manifest itself in student circles in India also. Our college authorities should take a careful note of it, and give it proper scope to express itself along healthy lines. If this is done with love and sympathy, the Indian undergraduate will learn to think for himself and develop an individuality of his own, which every well-wisher of the student community should be glad to see. Given proper direction, the youthful enthusiasm and the so-called spirit of revolt will certainly prove to be an undisguised blessing not only to the students but also to their elders.

#### A "CULTURAL WAGE" FOR LABOUR

The majority of labourers in India get what may be called only "a starvation wage" which is not sufficient to give them even one full meal a day. But as the result of persistent demands and repeated strikes, the workers in some of the industries of the country now receive a "living wage". The amount paid for labour is just enough somehow to support the labourer and his family, but little is left to be saved against a rainy day. The American labourer has passed through these two stages, and is now receiving a "saving wage," a part of which he can lay by for old age, after paying for the necessities of life. According to the *Literary Digest* the latest move in America in the evolution of wage is towards a "cultural wage".

"Industry in this country," says Mr. Owen D. Young—one of the great captains of American industry,— "is making progress toward the objective which I think should be sought. I believe we are making progress in the direction, not only of a living wage, but of a cultural wage, that which will enable the men to develop to such a point that they may take advantage of all the great opportunities which are offered to the citizens of the United States."

The "iron law of wages" accepted by the economists of the last century allowed a wage which could give the labourer only the bare means of subsistence. The "roseate prediction" of a "cultural wage" in America places before the worker the prospect of a remuneration sufficient to supply him not only with the creature comforts, but also with the cultural and spiritual pleasures of life. The American labourer may take much time in reaching this happy state. But whatever it may be, the very talk of a "cultural wage" is a clear proof of his greatly improved condition. The poor Indian labourer must first of all be able to get a "living wage" before he can dream of enjoying the blessings and benefits of modern life, and along with them equal opportunities of improving himself like his American brother.

#### IDEALS OF EDUCATION

In his thoughtful Convocation address delivered at the Bombay University on the 17th August, Dr. Brajendranath Seal, the great Indian savant, comprehensively surveyed the intricate problems of Indian education and discussed many salient points which are engaging the attention of some of the best intellects of our country. The principal theme of the address is how to harmonise the ancient Indian traditions with the modern ideals of education. Free and compulsory secondary education, socialisation as an antidote for the evils of overweening individualism, and education as a form of community service—these important ideals which are so dear to the hearts of the modern educationists were understood, said Dr. Seal, and practised in their true spirit in ancient India.

Dr. Seal also dealt with another momentous topic, viz., nationalism in education. He referred to two aspects of nationalism—the aspect of duty and the aspect of right. He observed that more emphasis should be laid on Dharma or duty than on Adhikara or right, so that advancement, individual as well as collective, could be achieved without any conflict or loss of energy and resources.

"A composite nationality like that in India," said Dr. Seal, "of which the proximate units are not individuals but communities sharply divided from one another by creed, custom and history, must cultivate the national sense, the sense of the national whole, above everything else. But if clash and collision among the congeries of communities is to be eschewed, nationalism in India should stress the duties and obligations of the units to one another, and of each to all, more than the rights of each against each or of one against all; in other words should stress Dharma more than Adhikara." He further observed: "Our new Dharma, the national Dharma must be based on social

equality and social justice, but it is this binding force of mutual duties and obligations (including duties to the Self, the Atman in every person or group) rather than the divisive and militant concept of rights, which must be the special message of the gospel of nationalism to a heterogeneous and composite society". We wish the policy indicated in the convocation address were adopted by the Indian Universities.

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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**SUPERCONSCIOUS VISION :** A lecture by Swami Prabhavananda. Published by the Vedanta Society of Portland, Oregon, U. S. A. Pp. 15.

This lecture deals with the superconscious state—what it is and how to reach it. It says : "If you but follow sincerely the teachings of one single religion, you will attain that state, because all lead to the same goal. Vedanta accepts all religions because Vedanta includes all methods. And these different methods have been classified under four different general divisions: Love, Work, Psychology, Knowledge. One has to follow one's own path, according to one's temperament and character." The lecture also sounds a note of warning when it observes that man should rise above the temptations of psychic powers which will come to him during the course of his spiritual practices.

**SWAMI VIVEKANANDA—THE PATRIOT MONK OF MODERN INDIA :** By K. N. Kasturi, M. A., B. L. Published by Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mysore. Pp. 37. Price 3 as.

This brochure is a lecture delivered on the occasion of the 64th birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, celebrated by the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mysore. It gives in a nut-shell the life and teachings of the great patriot-saint of modern India, to whose inspired teaching of the dynamic truths of our religion,—to whose gospel of manliness and strength and clarion-call for renunciation and service—the present awakening in our motherland owes more than to anything else. A perusal of this pamphlet, which is written in a racy and vigorous style, is sure to stimulate in the reader a desire to know more about the great Swami and to tread the path leading to the realisation of Truth which is the common goal of all souls.

**IN THE TEMPLE OF TRUTH :** By M. Sri Ramamurthi, M. A. With a foreword by Prof. Seshadri, M. A. of the Benares Hindu University. Pp. 51. Available at Goldwin & Co., College Street Market, Calcutta.

This is a small book of lyrics—a series of prose poems and reflections—reminding one of the poetry of Tagore.

The book consists of two parts. The first is devoted to 'poems' and the second to 'reflections'. The first part is of a very highly poetical quality. The pieces in it are exquisitely reflective of the spirit of direct communion with God and Nature, and capable of communicat-

ing to the sensitive reader a thrill of joy and devotion. In 'A Reminiscence', one of the pieces in the first part, the author says:—

"I was in a temple whose high-walled charms kept me from the god on the altar.

"I wandered marvelling at the fountains sleepily splashing their waters in the marble basins at the blue lakes where smooth-feathered ducks were swimming and fishes of gold and ruby shot for a moment and flashed in the sunlight, and at marble statues which, in their perfection of form and limb, mocked Nature's rude immature skill.

"As I stood there, lost in delight, the doors of the temple were closed and I remained without with my flowers unoffered and my camphor unburnt."

Equally beautiful—as well as naive—is the writer's sentiment expressed in :—

"I saw the waves break in fury on the treacherous shingle and I saw them sink into the sand. But now they are there in perfect wholeness, gleefully laughing at my puzzled gaze."

Telling of the beauty of Sri Krishna and the delight he feels at the mention of His name, the poet says : "The freshness of dawn, the many tints of the deep and full rainbow, the cool lustre of the stars. . . . . not one, nor all of these, can ever create in me the glow of delight that comes up at the mention of Thy name." The author truly observes in his Preface : "Truth has its temple, not in a glade nor on a river bank but in the hearts of wise and contemplative men. . . . . Of the few that find and enter it, fewer still care to think of the Inner Sanctuary." He thus says in "The only Cure," one of the lyrics : "Cure there is none for the ills of life save faith in the love of God. Throw out, forget these pangs of an hour in a reckless abandon of rapture." Elsewhere he adds : "O dive deep, my soul ! Plunge into the mid-sea. Thou wilt drop into a home of the rarest charm—a home such as was never seen on land."

The second part is not so poetical as the first, and it is not intended to be so ; but it contains many words of wisdom often expressed in a telling and epigrammatic manner. Here are given three specimens :

"Knowledge in one direction is ignorance in many others." "Books are the guides of the student, the crutches of the scholar, and the superfluities of the sage." "If our greatest men were allowed to govern the universe, they would send it back to chaos in five minutes."

The poet also speaks words of sound common sense when he says :

"Whether the world came out of atoms or energy, whether the Purusha severed himself or an egg burst on a vast ocean, these are all stupendous irrelevancies. The vital issue is of the future, not of the past: how am I to obtain peace?" Again, "They speak of the coming of the World-Teacher. He will never come, for He is always with the world. The world has only to recognise its Teacher."

The series of these "poems" and "reflections" has been aptly called "In the Temple of Truth". The author deserves to be congratulated on the success of his work.

**RURAL INDIA** (Journal of the Madras Forest Panchayats): Edited by Arcot Swaminatha Aiyar, B. A. Annual subscription Rs. 3.

This is a tri-lingual journal devoted to the discussion of rural problems. All matters having for their object the betterment of our villages are dealt with in the pages of this journal in English, Telugu and Tamil, the portions in the vernaculars being translations of those in English. The journal gives sound and up-to-date information on items of rural reconstruction such as rural education, rural co-operation, rural sanitation, rural agriculture and rural industries. We wish all success to our new contemporary which must commend itself to one and all interested in the improvement of our villages which form the heart of our motherland.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### THE RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, OOTACAMUND

The Ramakrishna Ashrama at Ootacamund, which is situated on a plot of land measuring two acres and commanding a beautiful view of Bishops Down, was opened with great eclat on Friday, the 24th September by Srīmat Swami Shivananda, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. A tastefully decorated life-size portrait of Sri Ramakrishna was taken to the new Ashrama in a procession headed by the Swami and accompanied by parties of men singing devotional songs and chanting Vedic hymns. On reaching the gate of the Ashrama, the Swami carried the portrait himself, installed it in the shrine, and offered worship. M. R. Ry. B. Rama Rao, President of the local committee which has been vigorously working for the construction of the Ashrama, next read a report of the work done and handed over the keys of the new building to the revered Swami who then formally declared it open.

At 5 p. m. a public meeting was held in the spacious hall of the new Ashrama. Swami Yatiswarananda, Head of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission Branch at Madras, was requested to speak on the Life and Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. The Swami in an eloquent lecture dwelt on the important facts of Sri Ramakrishna's life, and clearly brought out the salient features of his teachings. Brahmachari Sura Chairanya who next addressed the audience in Tamil also made a speech suited to the occasion. The function came to a close with Aratrikam and distribution of Prasad.

### SWAMI YATISWARANANDA AT OOTACAMUND

Swami Yatiswarananda, Head of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission Branch in Madras left for Ootacamund on the 22nd September to take part in the opening ceremony of the new Ashrama there. Besides speaking at the Ashrama on the Life and Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna on the 24th September, he also delivered three public lectures in the town at the request of the friends at Ootacamund. He spoke on the Principles of Hinduism, the Ideals of Worship and Aggressive Hinduism on the 25th, 26th and 29th September respectively.



The Swami began his speech on the Principles of Hinduism by remarking that the word 'Hinduism' which is derived from *Sindhu*—the Sanskrit name for the river Indus—has only a geographical significance, and the Persians used it to denote our religion which can be more aptly called the Vedanta. He then explained the essential principles of Hinduism. He observed that the mainstay of the religion is not the life or personality of an individual teacher but the grand spiritual experiences of the Vedic Rishis or seers. These seers realised spiritual truths which are eternal and which can be realised by anyone following their path. The Swami then explained how Hinduism embraces within itself all possible phases of religious experiences. From idol worship and the lowest fetichism to the highest Advaita or monism, every form of worship has a place in Hinduism. It ministers to the spiritual needs of a variety of types of men with diverse temperaments—emotional, active, intellectual or psychic. The Swami also spoke referring to the alliance of religion and philosophy in India and pointing out how religion is the practical side of philosophy and philosophy the intellectual aspect of religion.

In the second lecture which was on the Ideals of Worship, the Swami strongly emphasised the fact that religion consists not in doctrines and dogmas but in spiritual realisation, in being and becoming. It implies the manifestation of the divinity already in man, and worship of God whether Personal or Impersonal.

The lecturer then traced the evolution of the conception of God. First God was looked upon as an extra-cosmic being. The second stage in the evolution was reached when man realised that he was a part of God. And in the last stage he perceived the absolute unity of all existence.

The Swami next pointed out how the difficulty of the human mind to transcend the limitations of name and form led it to the worship of the Personal God. And the Personal God might be worshipped in His different aspects as master, friend, child and lover, etc. This worship again might be done by adoring God in a Pratima (image) and by Japa (repetition of the Lord's name), Stotra (hymn) and Manasa Puja (mental worship) leading to the realisation of the One without a second.

In the third lecture which was on Aggressive Hinduism, Swami Yatiswarananda spoke about the wonderful power of assimilation possessed by the Hindu faith and how the Sakas, Huns, Bactrians, Parthians and even Greeks and other races and tribes had to yield to this assimilative power. He then referred to the present deplorable condition of the Hindus and their religion, and pointed out the urgent necessity of assimilating the best culture of the East and the West. He also spoke of the great need for preaching abroad the vitalising truths of the Hindu faith. He also warned that our aim should be not to bring about a formal conversion by the mere sprinkling of water or muttering of words, but to conquer the heart of the foreigner through the mighty power of the Hindu spiritual culture.

All the lectures left a profound impression on the public of Ootacamund and served to awaken in them a genuine interest in the life-giving truths of Hinduism.

## THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, RANGOON

The report of this Sevashrama for 1925 shows that the usefulness of the institution has been increasing day by day. The total attendance of patients during the year under review was over 75,000. The number of indoor patients treated was 1,262. In the outdoor department the number of visits paid by the patients was 73,842, and the actual number of persons served was 34,152. The indoor department consists of two wards, one medical with 22 beds and another surgical with 23 beds.

Including the opening balance of Rs. 1,983-5-0 at the beginning of 1925, the total receipts were Rs. 27,651-14-3 of which Rs. 16,685-12-0 was received as donations and Rs. 8,844 3-0 as subscriptions. The expenditure was Rs. 26,295-1-9, the credit balance being Rs. 1,356-12-6.

This charitable institution stands in need of help. All voluntary contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the Honorary Chief Supervisor and Monk-in-charge, or by the Honorary Secretary.

## THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYAPITH, DEOGHAR

We are glad to find from the report for 1925 that in this educational institution there are at present 46 students on the roll, and 15 workers of whom 10 belong to the teaching staff.

The most important feature of the year under review was the erection of three separate blocks of building—two for dormitories and one for kitchen, servants' quarters, etc.

The total receipts for 1925 with the opening balance amounted to Rs. 11,235-6-9 and the expenditure for the equipments of the school, maintenance of the boys and teachers, and establishment was Rs. 9,257-3-10 1/2, leaving a balance of Rs. 1,978-2-10 1/2. The sum of Rs. 10,509-10-10 was received for building purposes and the opening balance in the building fund at the beginning of the year under report was Rs. 6,107-3-6. Rs. 16,104-1-9 was spent for the construction of the new blocks of building and Rs. 512 12-7 was left as balance.

The institution is at present badly in need of an office-room, a library-hall, a laboratory, a prayer-hall, a guest house and one more dormitory. An approximate sum of Rs. 50,000 will be required to meet these demands. Besides, to place the institution on a permanent basis and meet the recurring expenditure, a permanent fund is also needed. The Vidyapith therefore earnestly appeals to the generous public for help. Contributions may be sent to the Secretary of the Vidyapith, or to the President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur, Howrah, or to the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, 1, Mukherjee Lane, Bagh-bazar, Calcutta.

## THE VIVEKANANDA SOCIETY, JAMSHEDPUR

The work of the Society which is a little over five years old can be classified as religious, educational and philanthropic. The Society teaches the Hindu Scriptures in daily classes. It maintains a library

and free reading room. It is also running three schools and a night school, the total number of boys on the roll being 96. It also maintains a Students' Home in which there were five boys at the end of the year 1925, as well as a Workers' Home for the residential workers who are available for regular service of various kinds. Besides these activities the Society does philanthropic work by nursing the sick, cremating the dead bodies of the poor, and rendering occasional help to the needy.

Some work remains to be done for the completion of the main building of the Society. A small brick and tile structure has been put up for accomodating the boys of one of the schools which are being conducted. A debt of Rs. 4,500 has been incurred on account of the construction of the building. The Society is in need of support and appeals for help.

#### THE VIVEKANANDA SOCIETY, COLOMBO

The annual report of this society for 1925 shows that it is rendering valuable service. The number of members on the roll was 555 as against 399 of the previous year. The society has started a Tamil monthly by the name of Vivekanandam under the editorship of Swami Vipulananda of the Ramakrishna Order and owns, besides, a small library. It desires to start a primary school for poor boys but is in great need of funds for the purpose. For this as well as for liquidating the debt it has incurred in purchasing its premises, it appeals for help from the generous public.

#### THE RAMAKRISHNA SEVASAMITI, KARIMGUNGE, SYLIET

This charitable institution is situated in an out-of-the-way village. It maintains a small public library and a night school for the poor depressed class boys. Besides medical aid, it gives also monetary help to the needy. During Melas and times of distress, it also undertakes temporary relief work. We wish the Samiti all success.

#### SRI RAMAKRISHNA BALIYA BHAKTHA JANA SABHA,

#### KOTTAGIRI

This Bhajana Sabha was opened on the 21st August by Swami Sitaram in a newly constructed Mandapam at Thimmatti, a Badaga village, which is two miles from Kottagiri in the Nilgiris District. A picture of Sri Ramakrishna and another of Swami Vivekananda were installed in the Mandapam. A large gathering of about 800 persons attended the function. Prasad was distributed to them as well as to 200 poor people. There was a procession with devotional music in the evening and the whole night was spent in Sankirtan. On the 22nd morning, Swami Sitaram delivered a lecture on Sri Ramakrishna and His Mission.

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# THE VEDANTA KESARI

" Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

" Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want

And the first step in getting strength is to uphold

The Upanishads and believe that ' I am the Atman'."

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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## P R A Y E R

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु विष्णुमायेति शब्दिता ।

नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु शक्तिरूपेण संस्थिता ।

नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु मातृरूपेण संस्थिता ।

नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

चितिरूपेण या कर्त्तुमेतद्व्याप्यस्थिता जगत् ।

नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

To the Goddess who is called the All-pervading Maya in all things,—salutations to Her, salutations to Her, salutations to Her, salutations, salutations.

To the Goddess who exists in all beings as Power,—salutations to Her, salutations to Her, salutations to Her, salutations, salutations.

To the Goddess who exists in all beings as their Mother,—salutations to Her, salutations to Her, salutations to Her, salutations, salutations.

To the Goddess who, pervading all the world, exists therein in the form of Intelligence,—salutations to Her, salutations to Her, salutations to Her, salutations, salutations.

## SPIRITUAL TALKS WITH SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

*(At the Belur Math)*

THE SWAMI—Do you know why I seriously ask you all to devote yourselves heart and soul to the Lord ? Our Thakur (Sri Ramakrishna) used to make us do all the necessary spiritual practices through constant pressure, when we were of your age. In boyhood the mind remains plastic like clay. So it gets an indelible impression of whatever it comes in contact with. So long as clay remains soft, you can give it any shape you like. But when clay is burnt, this can't be done. Your mind now is like unburnt clay. It can be moulded in any way you want. It is now pure and untainted. So it can be directed very easily towards God. If the mind is kept wholly occupied with the thoughts of the Lord from now, no foreign thought can disturb it. If the mind be firmly fixed on the divine idea, you need not have any anxiety about your spiritual progress.

The mind is like a packet of mustard seeds. If the seeds get scattered once, it is very difficult to gather them. So I ask you to mould your mind before its energy becomes scattered like mustard seeds. When you will grow old and the energy of your mind will have been frittered away, you will have to make very strenuous efforts to concentrate ; you will experience a tremendous difficulty in focussing the mind on a particular object. Don't you see how impressionable is the mind of little boys ? You are now like them. If you want to mould yourself, strive for it with earnestness within the period from your sixteenth to your thirtieth year. After that there is little chance of achieving anything substantial. Up to the thirtieth year the body and the mind remain fresh. And that is the time when the mind can be given a definite shape. But one is to labour hard,

devoting one's heart and soul to one's ideal of life. Whatever impression the mind may receive during youth will last throughout life. So I say when you have determined to lead a holy life in order to realise God, strive your utmost from to-day. Your health is all right now. The mind also is very plastic. This is just the time for doing spiritual practices. Give a mould to your mind through constant struggle. If this period of your life passes away, little chance there will be to do anything afterwards. . . . . If you can leave a strong stamp on the mind during this period, if you can make God the be-all and end-all of your life, and if you can devote yourself sincerely to realise Him, you will be free from all sorrow and pain. No misery, no unhappiness will be able to throw you off your balance. You will become the inheritor of everlasting bliss and joy divine.

What does man want ? He wants happiness and bliss. How he runs after it ! What all plans he makes ! What strenuous efforts he puts forth ! But still does he get it ? After many an attempt, after many a plan, he gets a rebuff. He plans again and again but to no purpose. In this way his whole life ebbs away. He has not the good fortune of enjoying peace and happiness at all. He labours hard like an ordinary labourer and in return gets sorrow and pain in life. He then departs for ever from this world. Thus he lives and dies in vain. And nothing better can be expected by one who runs after vain pleasures, forgetting the goal of life.

If you wish to attain real happiness, you must sacrifice all worldly pleasures and all attachment for fleeting joys, and then must direct the whole energy of your mind towards God. The more you will advance towards Him, the greater the bliss you will realise. The more your mind will get attached to the world and to sense-enjoyments, the more you will suffer.

Do you know what is the nature of man ? He seeks only after pleasure, joy and merriment. And this

mistake is made from the very beginning. Ninety-nine per cent. of those who seek happiness do not know what it really is. So they grasp at whatever they find near at hand and believe they have got the thing they seek. But when they are disappointed, they take up something else. And when they fail again, they bemoan their lot. But see the fun of it—they are disappointed again and again, but still they will not change their course, they will not take up the right path. In this way they pass their lives only in receiving blows and bewailing their lot. To illustrate this, our Thakur (Sri Ramakrishna) used to cite the parable of the camel. The camel would never take good grass even if it is found close by. It knows very well that thorny grass makes the mouth bleed, but still it would not desist from eating the same. In a similar way, man suffers for want of good thoughts, good impressions and good desires.

You are boys—very young boys. Your mind has not yet received any evil impression from the outside world. So if you can struggle hard even from now, you will be able to get rid of life's sorrows and miseries.

Whatever riches you may possess, whatever chances you may have of living a happy and prosperous life, and however wide may be your circle of friends and well-wishers, you won't have real happiness. Sense-pleasures last only for a few minutes, or at the most for an hour; they do not last longer. And then comes a reaction of misery. Thus, reaction follows action. If one is to attain true and eternal happiness in life, one must aspire after that happiness which brings no reaction in its train. And wherein lies that true and eternal happiness? It lies in realising God. It is in this divine enjoyment alone that there is no reaction; all other kinds of enjoyments you can name are followed by this reaction. And you must know that wherever there is reaction, there is sorrow and suffering.

Never forget the ideal of human life. This life is not meant for whiling away the numbered days some-

how or 'other in eating, drinking and sleeping like an animal, in idle gossip and the like. When you have been born as a human being, spurn all worldly enjoyments. Firmly resolve to realise God and attain infinite bliss. Flinch not even if you die in the attempt.

Why have you come away from your hearth and home in the name of our Thakur (Sri Ramakrishna), causing so much pain and sorrow to your parents? Is it not to realise Him—to get rid of the sorrows and sufferings of the world and attain peace and happiness everlasting?

Sincerely struggle then towards the ideal of life, so long as you have the strength of body and mind. By no means relax your efforts, saying that you will realise the ideal in time or that it will be possible only through the Lord's grace and so forth. It is idlers that talk all this empty twaddle. I don't want to give you any chance to idle away your time. If you are not earnest about striving hard, speak out clearly—"I have a desire to enjoy worldly pleasures." Say—"I have not got the sincere hankering for realising Truth—for attaining to God." Let your speech and your thought conform to each other.

When are you going to do spiritual practices? The best part of life, as I told you, is from the sixteenth to the thirtieth year. Do you hope that after wasting away these valuable years in useless pursuits, you will be able to take to spiritual practices in old age? Know that to think like this is what may be called cheating oneself—deceiving oneself.

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## EDITORIAL NOTES

### THE PRIMAL CAUSE AS POWER

**W**ITH the progress of science the dividing line between the so-called matter and force, and even between the so-called living and the non-living is fast vanishing away. And the modern scientist is coming to look upon the universe as the play of an eternal infinite energy manifesting itself as all things. The philosophical speculator also thinks of the primary cause as a limitless power expressing itself in infinite ways both in the worlds of matter and thought. "We are able to regard every phenomenon," observes Herbert Spencer very frankly, "as a manifestation of some Power by which we are acted upon ; though Omnipresence is unthinkable, yet, as experience discloses no bounds to the diffusion of phenomena, we are unable to think of limits to the presence of this Power ; while the criticisms of science teach us that this Power is Incomprehensible. And this consciousness of Incomprehensible Power, called Omnipresent from inability to assign its limits, is just that consciousness on which Religion dwells." Indeed, man's desire to fathom the depth of the mystery that surrounds him, and to find out the Cause of all causes began from a hoary antiquity into which history does not dare to peep. As the Upanishad tells us, earnest seekers after the Truth inquired even at the very dawn of India's religious consciousness about the Origin of things. They asked—"What is the cause of the Universe ? Is it what is called Brahman ? Whence are we born ? Whereby do we live ? Oh ye who know Brahman, tell us at whose command we abide, whether in pain or in pleasure." The seers of ancient India did not try to answer these momentous questions in any superficial way. Instead of limiting themselves to the domain of speculation, these mighty spiritual giants, devoted as they were to meditation and concentration, dived into the very depth of their being, and came face to face with the mighty "Power of the God of gods" from which all be-

ings are born, by which, when born, they live, and into which they enter after death. Creation, preservation and destruction are thus three successive expressions of the same Infinite Power.

#### THE MOTHERHOOD OF GOD

The devotee calls this Shakti or Cosmic Energy, the Mother of the Universe. She is the Prakriti—the Creatrix, or the Maya—the inscrutable Power of Brahman, and as such inseparable from It. “The Divine Mother,” says Sri Ramakrishna, “is the same as God the Absolute. When thought of as inactive He is called the Absolute. Again, when He is thought of as active—as creating, preserving and destroying—He is called the Divine Energy or the Divine Mother.” Thus in Her static aspect She is the Absolute—the One without a second. In Her kinetic aspect She is the Maya—the Power of the Lord, the great Mother who, —according to Sri Sankaracharya, “brings forth this whole universe, is neither existent nor non-existent nor partaking of both characters, is most wonderful and cannot be described in words.” The Supreme can be thought of by man as either Infinite Power or Infinite Being. And of these two the aspect of Power at first appeals to him more than the other. The child as soon as he comes to self-consciousness finds himself in the lap of the mother who nourishes him with her life’s blood, hides him in her bosom at times of danger and protects him from all harms. No wonder that he associates infinite mercy and infinite power with the idea of mother—the sweetest name he has ever known. The soul that becomes a child in the spiritual world also gives the same attributes to his Divine Mother. Truly speaking, God is “neither male nor female nor neuter”. But man with his instinctive idea of a child ordinarily thinks of Him as father or mother. The Semitic religions believe that Eve was made out of a rib of Adam. Thus woman being inferior to man by her supposed Biblical origin, it is the idea of

fatherhood of God that appeals to them, but not that of motherhood which they brand as 'paganism'. But the Hindu worships God not only as Father but also as Mother. And he usually places the name of the mother before that of the father. "Let thy mother be to thee like unto a god ! Let thy father be to thee like unto a god !"—enjoins the Upanishad. "Thou art Oh Lord ! our mother and father." "My mother is the Goddess Parvati ; my father is the great God Shiva. All the devotees of Shiva are my relatives, and all the three worlds are my own native land"—so says the devotee. The mother is mentioned first and then the father. She is a greater object of love and adoration than the father. "Mother and motherland are even greater than heaven itself"—says the patriotic Hindu devotee. That is why he thinks of God in the tenderest relationship of the Mother—the creatrix and sustainer of the whole universe.

#### THE MOTHER IN HER VARIOUS ASPECTS

The Hindu sages, all-comprehensive as they were in their outlook, did not fail to realise the Mother in Her various aspects. In the words of Sri Ramakrishna to the great Brahmo preacher, Sri Keshab Chandra Sen, "The Mother sports with the world, Her toy, under various aspects and various names". Now She is adored as the Goddess Unconditioned, Absolute, Formless. Again, She is worshipped in the Hindu homes as the Mother—the Consort of the God of Eternity and Infinity,—coming to Her children with Her blessings and protection. Further at the burning ghat She appears as the terrible Goddess of death, as the Dreaded Mother, the All-destroyer. And after death She takes back all beings to Herself. She "puts together the seeds of Creation". Is not death as real as birth and sustenance ? Is not the cremation ground as real as the nursery and the home ? If God is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, is He not also the Great Destroyer to whom all beings finally go back after dissolution ?

## KALI THE MOTHER

The different aspects of God are represented by the wonderful mystical symbol of Kali—a dark-blue female form having a garland of skulls round Her neck, and standing on the white prostrate form of Shiva—the symbol of the Absolute. With two of her hands raised in the act of blessing and protecting, and with the other two holding a knife and a bleeding head respectively—Kali the Mother is the wonderful combination of compassion and terror, of life and death. She creates and sustains the universe. She also dances the dance of destruction. And She draws all beings unto Herself—the mighty source from which they come. Verily does Kali take the devotee from death to Immortality. Through the mouth of Vak—the woman seer of the Rig Veda, who identified herself with the Supreme Spirit—the Divine Mother spoke—“It is I who am the Governess of the universe and grantor of wealth. To Me Brahman is known as my Self. I am foremost amongst those to whom offerings should be made. The offerers of sacrifice place Me in many places. I assume many forms and make all creatures re-enter Myself.” The weak and the faint-hearted, as Swami Vivekananda says, “put a garland of skulls round Thy neck, and then start back in terror, and call Thee ‘the Merciful’ !” But the heroic child of the Mother is he who is ever ready to see Her in happiness as in misery, in life as in death. Nay he even welcomes Her in Her terrible aspect as does the Swami—

“Scattering plagues and sorrows  
 Dancing mad with joy  
     Come, Mother, come !  
 For terror is Thy name !  
 Death is in Thy breath,  
 And every shaking step  
 Destroys a world for e’er.  
 Thou ‘Time,’ the All-destroyer !  
     Come, O Mother, come !”

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S VISION OF THE MOTHER<sup>4</sup>.

Sri Ramakrishna worshipped and realised the Mother in Her manifold aspects. His adoration of Kali the Mother implied a childlike, ecstatic self-consecration to the Motherhood of God. And those who came in close touch with him could not but be deeply impressed by the ideal. Even the Rev. Pratap Chandra Majumdar, Keshab's foremost lieutenant, frankly acknowledged Sri Ramakrishna's influence on Keshab and his Brahmo Samaj when he wrote—"He by his childlike Bhakti, by his strong conceptions of an ever-ready motherhood, helped to unfold it (the ideal of God as Mother) in our minds wonderfully." Sri Ramakrishna realised the Mother in Her transcendent aspect as "the limitless ocean of indescribable Effulgence and ineffable Joy". Besides seeing Her in other forms, mild as well as terrible, he also realised Her in Her immanent aspect, and recognised Her in every woman whom he looked upon as Her incarnation. He therefore honoured every woman as his Mother, and could not think of Her in any other relation even in dream. "Women, whether chaste or unchaste, naturally good or bad," declared Sri Ramakrishna, "should be regarded as images of the Divine Mother," and he himself followed the precept to the very letter. "In the Aryan home," observed Sister Nivedita from direct experience, "woman stands supreme. As wife in the West,—lady and queen of her husband—as mother in the East,—a goddess throned in her son's worship,—she is the bringer of sanctity and peace." And the highest honour that a Hindu can show to woman is not to pay compliments to her for her youth and physical charms, which is in reality an insult to womanhood, but to regard her as the Divine Mother incarnate on earth,—an ideal essentially and traditionally Indian.

## SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND MOTHERHOOD OF WOMAN

By his life and precepts Sri Ramakrishna vindicated the ideal of the Motherhood of God and woman. He

looked not to the body but to the Spirit. He renounced woman in her physical relation and realised her as the Mother Divine. A "renouncer of woman" though he was, he accepted a Sannyasini of extraordinary learning and spirituality as one of his Gurus, and under her guidance he passed through the most difficult spiritual practices of the Tantra, without swerving for a moment from his ideal of Motherhood. Just as he worshipped the Mother in the image of stone, so he worshipped Her in Her living images, nay even in the person of the holy lady to whom he was united by the ties of what the world calls marriage. The Rev. Pratap Chandra Majumdar, who spoke in the highest terms of Sri Ramakrishna's conquest of flesh and his divine relationship towards women, charged him with his "almost barbarous treatment of his wife". In his "Life and Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna," Prof. Max Muller justly defends Sri Ramakrishna against the charge. It was not at all possible for Sri Ramakrishna, fully established as he was in the ideal of Motherhood, to live *maritalement*. And the high-souled lady who was at once a wife, nun and disciple to him gave him her whole-hearted assent to lead the monastic life, and she herself took the vows of poverty and chastity. In thus renouncing the natural joys of a human mother, she became, as Sri Ramakrishna predicted, the spiritual mother of thousands of children who looked to her for inspiration and guidance in matters not only spiritual but also secular. "It is strange," very rightly observed Prof. Max Muller, "that a man of Mozoomdar's knowledge and experience should have considered the resolve of Ramakrishna's wife to live with him as a Sannyasini as barbarous treatment. . . . . If she was satisfied with her life, who has any right to complain ; and is love between husband and wife really impossible without the procreation of children?" Sri Ramakrishna's was a spiritual marriage. And the Sannyasin husband made the Sannyasini wife the partner of the Immortal Bliss he realised through his superhuman

spiritual disciplines. Each looked upon the other as the embodiment of the Divine. "I tell you frankly and truly," Sri Ramakrishna once told his wife, "that the Mother who is worshipped in the Temple is the same mother who has given birth to this body, and She again in another form is present before me as yourself. I always look upon you as an incarnation of my Mother Kali." Indeed, as the culmination of his spiritual practices Sri Ramakrishna worshipped his wife as a living representation of the Divine Mother. And we have it on the authority of Swami Saradananda—the Master's disciple and biographer—that at the end of the worship the twin souls—the worshipper and the worshipped—merged and found their real union in the consciousness of the One without a second. Says the Upanishad—"The husband is loved not for his own sake but for the sake of the Atman dwelling in him. The wife is loved not for her own sake but for the sake of the Atman dwelling in her." Sri Ramakrishna proved in his own as also his divine partner's life the glory of the sexless Self as proclaimed in the Hindu scriptures.

#### THE IDEAL OF MOTHERHOOD—A WORLD-NEED

Through the dispensation of Providence Sri Ramakrishna vindicated the glory of Mother-worship which in course of time came to be associated with corrupt practices that might imply anything but religion. Further, he realised and preached the grand Hindu ideal of the Motherhood of woman with a new force and meaning. Impelled by the spirit of the age, the modern woman wants to come out of her seclusion, take her place by the side of man, and share with him the joys and responsibilities of life. Everywhere there is now a freer association of the two sexes than ever before. But unfortunately men and women look more to the physical charms than to the glory of the Mother within. The cult of body-worship is gaining strength, and threatens to bring about a moral chaos spelling ruin to mankind.

And throughout the world there is therefore the urgent need of the worship of the Mother "whose external manifestations," as Swami Vivekananda puts it, "appealing to the senses madden men, but whose internal manifestations such as knowledge, devotion, discrimination and dispassion make man omniscient, of unfailing purpose, and a knower of Brahman." The Mother is to be worshipped in the right spirit through purity and devotion. Then and then alone will She be propitiated and pleased to open to man the gateway to immortality and bliss. It is therefore that the Shakta devotee prays to the Mother—"Thou art the eternal Power of the Lord. Thou art the seed of creation and the Supreme Maya. All this universe has been bewitched by Thee. Thou, when pleased, art the Cause of the salvation of men. All women without exception are parts of Thee. By Thee alone, O Mother ! is the universe filled. How can we praise Thee who art beyond the highest praise ? Be gracious, O Mother of the world ! Be gracious, O Queen of the universe !"

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## THE PLACE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA IN INDIAN NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION

*By Swami Siddheswarananda*

**S**RI Ramakrishna is not merely a personality but also a principle. As his teachings are the true echoes of the Vedas and the Upanishads, they will ever remain eternal. Apart from the guidance and peace they give to individual spiritual aspirants, Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings form the foundations on which a truly re-constructed India can be built. Swami Vivekananda has said in reply to the Calcutta address of welcome : " If this nation wants to rise, take my word for it, it will have to rally enthusiastically round his name. " A superficial reader may find in these bold words of the Swamiji only the veneration of a disciple for his Guru couched in superlative terms. But a deeper student of the life of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna will have to agree with the Swamiji that his was " the most marvellous manifestation of soul-power that you can read of, much less expect to see. . . . . I do not care in what light you understand this great sage, it matters not how much respect you pay him, but I challenge you face to face that here is a manifestation of the most marvellous power that has been for several centuries in India, and it is your duty to study this power, to find what has been done for the regeneration, for the good of India, and for the good of the whole race through it. Aye, long before ideas of universal religion and brotherly feeling between different sects were mooted and discussed in any country in the world, here, in sight of this city, had been a living man whose whole life was a Parliament of Religions as it should be. "

The first contribution of Sri Ramakrishna to the growth of the national consciousness was to re-emphasise the spiritual duties of man. Many of us are not yet men, but merely " candidates to humanity ". One of the trite

sayings of the Master is that a real man is verily he in whom has dawned the consciousness that he is a man as contrasted with the brute. The Master constantly reminds us of the truth of the poet's words—

“ Unless above himself he can

Erect himself, how poor a thing is man ! ”

To train the mind to function on the mental and spiritual planes is the privilege of man alone. Society in India is made up of men, the generality of whom believe in this privilege. And the Indian society is our nation. It has been often remarked by our critics that there is no nation in India and the national idea we are forming now is not native to the genius of our peoples. But if we widen our definition of a nation and find in any community of peoples the guidance of an immanent ideal, with instruments to work it and heroes who have realised it, we can then undoubtedly remark that the sure foundation of nation-building exists in India. The only way to quicken the national consciousness is to strengthen this foundation. In our motherland, from time immemorial, we find the basic materials for the national edifice, and because these still remain sound and strong, we can challenge any critic who makes out any theory to show that we are not a nation. This immanent ideal in India had been and is the acquisition and application of the supreme knowledge. Our society has grown up throwing out from its bosom worthy representatives of our culture, who have realised the Indian ideal of life and by whom the work of national reconstruction has been accelerated. Oftentimes the ideal of life was forgotten and the Indian Samaj (nation) through which opportunities were given to realise it was about to be wrecked. Then came the great heroes of our culture, who reminded us of the ideal and when the consciousness of the ideal was re-enlivened, the nation automatically used to become elastic enough to adapt itself to the requirements of the times. Such a forgetfulness came over the Indian mind in the beginning

of the nineteenth century and hence was the advent of Sri Ramakrishna to remind us of our duties as men. When the ideal of true manhood becomes accepted by the majority of our peoples, once again our nation will rise and become vital enough to make us grow into godliness and purity. So the first contribution of Sri Ramakrishna to the growth of our national mind is to recapitulate to us the primary duties of man.

Another great idea which the Master has given unto posterity, which is also necessary for reconstructing a national India is his message of harmony of religions. This idea is not a hypothesis or a vain postulate. It has come out of the very depths of his realisation. This is an age of cosmopolitanism and any attempt to narrow down opinions would be prejudicial to the formation of mass-consciousness. And when these opinions happen to be based on religious convictions, the danger that will result to society from touching on the delicate constitution of the mass-mind which views with alarm the slightest disturbance or innovation in the sphere of religion, cannot be overestimated. Indian society could not for several decades meet in a common cause ; for it lost all its power to produce men of the first spiritual magnitude and had become moribund and inactive. So people could see only the wide differences existing in social groups. The Hindu, the Christian, the Muslim, the Parsi and the Jain could never dream of anything common in their everyday life. So they felt themselves totally isolated and as spiritual education was not given to them, they began to exaggerate the individual importance of the religions of their respective communities. They did not know that if the Christian could retire into his chapel and kneel and pray earnestly even as Jesus Christ had done, resisting all the temptations of Satan, he would reach the same plane of mystical consciousness which a Hindu would attain by his fasts and vigils and worship ; or that the realisation of the Muslim when he remained closeted in the mosque with his Maker and

prayed for that resignation to the will of God for which Islam stands, was in no way inferior to that which a Jain, Parsi or Buddhist would have, if he also like another Siddhartha Gautama were to make an adamant determination not to move from his seat until the Reality was intuitively perceived. There were not earnest men in all the social groups of India to attempt to realise this harmony. They could not understand that just as all the jackals cry in the same pitch, so also in expressing the beauties of final realisation, all the great teachers of the different religions have taught truths that are fundamentally the same. But the followers of the various denominational faiths could only perceive their differences, and this has strengthened the clash of political and social opinions which has to-day produced a conflagration the flames of which have not yet been extinguished. If all the important religionists had sent forth their representatives to practise communion with God, they would all have embraced one another in discovering that all of them had realised the same God. But this was not to be and as a result, this experiment was tried in the life of a single individual—Sri Ramakrishna—who became Hindu, Christian and Muslim in turn and declared that the standpoints of all these communities were the same. So no one need change his religious faith. What is necessary is only a sincere and yearning heart that would not cease from its quest till Truth is felt and realised. In following the different religions Sri Ramakrishna evinced an intense interest in them which was not merely an academical one. He went through the proper disciplines prescribed by these different faiths, assuming for a time, the modes of dress and manners of the particular community whose religion he practised. And he found out that the externals of one sect, though abhorrent to another, were useful for spiritual progress. Thus he showed a way to peace among religious sects based on the toleration of even the non-essentials of each.

The Sarvadharmasamanvaya—the synthesis of all religions—which Sri Ramakrishna realised was not any cheap eclecticism in which the fine flowers of all the variant faiths were garlanded into a beautiful bouquet. It was a Dharma discovered by the Master as a message for the Yuga (age), on which all communities can unite without deviating the least from the really spiritual traditions of their individual faiths, but on the other hand making their faiths dynamic and living. The mythological and theological aspects of each faith are only intended to make its votaries stick to their own path with proper Sraddha (devotion). If we look only to the externals, we can only find diversity. Different methods were resorted to by the Acharyas (teachers) to effect the introversion of the mind meditating on God—the Antarmukhibhava (introspective mood) leading all to one and the same goal.

We are now realising that a true unity of the races in India cannot be gained on a political platform. Unity can only come when we recognise that the cultural aim of all religionists is to take us to God. Sri Ramakrishna proclaimed this truth and he is therefore our national hero. When communities are to-day flying at each other's throat, there comes to us this message of the Samanwayacharya—Teacher of Harmony—of the modern epoch, advising us to stick to our professed faiths and practise religious Sadhanas (disciplines) to uphold the truth of the teachings of our particular denominations. Hinduism can never make all the Indian population Hindu, nor Islam can succeed in converting the whole of India to Mohammedanism. But both can succeed in creating a public opinion which will help them to sink their differences and to recognise all spiritual paths as best suited for their respective followers to take them to the divine goal. This message is urgently wanted now in India in any progressive work of national reconstruction, and we shall ever remain indebted to the Master for showing us by the experiences of his

life that such a cultural unity can be brought about within the field of everyday life. It may satisfy the selfish interest of some to fan prejudices. But they do not understand the critical state through which we are now passing. Should this realisation of Sri Ramakrishna remain with him alone and not benefit us? If meetings and congregations held to honour the Master cannot infuse in us a positive respect for all religions and cannot stimulate us to endeavour building a cultural ark to carry the heterogeneous population of India from all chaotic internecine disturbances to a safe haven of mutual co-ordination, sympathy and love, then we are far away from recognising the greatness of the Master and shall be hindering and not hastening the work of national reconstruction. Sri Ramakrishna is our national hero, because he has shown how a true unity of all the peoples of India can be achieved on the cultural basis of mutual goodwill and sympathy.

If the Dharmasamanwaya (harmony of religions) forms the most important contribution of the Master to the progress of the world-thought, the Bhavasamanwaya (harmony of ideals) he formulated is equally important for us. It was on this Bhavasamanwaya of the Master that Swami Vivekananda based the Upasana (worship) for the modern age. With a prophetic vision Swamiji discovered "the inseparable and complex relationship between Dharma as expressed in the life of the citizens and Dharma as expressed in the ideals of the sannyasin's life." In India citizenship is not to be considered as a right to squeeze for oneself the largest amount of social happiness, but it should be accepted as a duty to sublimate and harmonise the rights of living in a social polity with the privileges of the soul of man to express its inner urge for ultimate freedom and emancipation. This was a new contribution to the thought of India which the Swamiji learnt from the experiences of his Master.

To infuse manliness into a nation sunk in lethargy and indolence the only means is through work and work

alone. But work as Yoga (means to communion) is intended only for certain temperaments. How to prescribe work for all as a Sadhana (Spiritual practice) without injuring individual Bhavas (ideals)? Can the country be saved from an atrophy of its religious instincts if work alone is emphasised? Those who have not understood the real relationship between the lives of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda are apt to think that the work initiated by the Swamiji was a departure from the line of thinking of the Master and was a violation of his behests. But it is not so. The Swamiji alone was able to recognise in his Guru, the divine messenger, who has come to deliver India from her narrow-mindedness that has weakened the spiritual stamina of the race.

Once Sri Ramakrishna was in a mood of compassion for suffering humanity. He was in an exalted state of consciousness in which he was muttering to himself in half-disjointed sentences: "Jeeve Daya, Jeeve Daya"—"compassion to the living, compassion to the living." But the emotion that he was steeped in was suddenly disturbed by a counter wave and in a very troubled manner the Master chid himself: "No, no, it is not compassion to the living—Mother! who am I to feel compassion? It is all You, all You alone that exist as the living. So it is Jeeve Seva, Jeeve Seva—it is service, it is service to the living." This change in the mood of the Master was inexplicable to most of his disciples. But there was one amongst them whose keen intellect could discern its real meaning. Vivekananda remarked that this utterance of the Master was a revelation to him and that a potent solvent had been found to unite all the divergent temperaments of the land in the common cause of service to the motherland. And in one sweep of his imagination Swamiji saw the birth of a new India, born out of the Shakti (power) that will be infused in the country through Seva or service. This compassion to Jivas (living beings) was also one of the cardinal features of the Vaishnavism of Sri Gauranga.

In and through this universe it is the Energy of the great Lord that is manifesting and it is our duty to perceive this truth. When one knows that it is God who has become all these (*Vasudeva sarvamidam*), who are we to feel compassion? Compassion can be felt only for an inferior object. But when we are made to understand that we are surrounded by God and God alone—*Isavasyamidam sarvam*—it is our duty to kneel down and serve God in His manifold forms. Selfish ignorance makes us feel that we are separate from the universe, that we are all in all, and that our satisfaction lies in adding to our possessions. This selfishness has been the cause of all our misery in life. But true religion says—"Open your eyes, look round, and see God and God alone. What will you do when God appears in flesh and blood before you? Will you feel compassion or will you kneel down to pray and serve? You are surrounded by the weak, the poor, the destitute, and the miserable. They are all the forms of Narayana. He has become all these out of mercy for you. He gives you innumerable opportunities to widen your outlook and broaden your heart." This is the *Seva Dharma* (gospel of service) which Swami Vivekananda has popularised as the only means to ameliorate the condition of his countrymen—to bring them out of the depths of animality to the position of men and gods on earth.

All temperaments can unite under the banner of Service. When the *Bhakta* (devotee) tells his beads and meditates in the cavity of his heart, he has to focus his mind on a Divine Form. But the ideal of service demands him to open his eyes and see his Chosen Form existing all around him. When Sri Ramakrishna had once gone out into the garden, he was in need of a mug of water. There was none close by to serve him and so he was calling out to some one to come and help him. But underneath the *Panchavati* (the group of five trees at the foot of which Sri Ramakrishna went through various religious practices), there was a devotee who was



meditating. Seeing that he was unmoved, Sri Ramakrishna remarked in fun—"Look ! He on whom the devotee is meditating is stranded outside for want of a cup of water." This illustrates a great truth. We see the very presence of the living God around us and is it not our foolishness to discard His presence and seek Him somewhere else? The ideal of service wants us to serve Him, nurse Him, and make Him comfortable. He, the Almighty Lord, does not require any service from us, in a higher sense. But out of compassion He has taken upon Himself all the sorrows, miseries and diseases of life so that we humble mortals may have an opportunity to serve Him in the various forms He has assumed for our sake. So let us worship these living Narayanas and become blessed. In the state of his highest realisation, the Bhakta (devotee) will see the form of his Ishtam (Chosen Ideal) and nothing else around him, just as the Gopis realised that the trees, cows, shepherds and they also had all assumed the form of Krishna. If that be the highest realisation, why not train the mind to perceive our Ishta Devata (Chosen Ideal) from the very start of our spiritual life ? Let us make this our Sadhana (spiritual practice) from the beginning and our Siddhi (realisation) shall be nearer at hand.

A Jnani (man of Knowledge) with a differently constituted mind can take up this Karma Upasana (worship through service) without breaking away from the path of his Sadhana (spiritual practice). He wants to deny his little self, but is unable to progress, because when he faces the world, he finds that he is the self-same old selfish being. Even the great Sankara felt this selfishness when he asked a Chandala to clear away from his path on the ground of the Chandala's being a low-born man. He had his mind opened to him by the so-called Chandala who was none else than Lord Visweswara Himself. A Jnani (man of Knowledge) cannot be evolved out of any tall talk regarding the Universal Self and such other terms. What is wanted is hard and sincere practice

Why not begin to feel then that the cobbler, the pariah, the destitute, the illiterate, and the miserable, are our own flesh and blood, our own brothers, nay even our own Self? This method of spiritual practice will certainly take us nearer the goal.

For a Karmi (man of Action), the path of Service is the best. His ideal is to perceive intense activity in the midst of inactivity and inactivity in the midst of intense activity. He has to realise that Samatwam (sameness) which comes from real Yoga. All the differences in his mind-stuff are caused by feelings and perceptions of difference. These can be removed and his mind can be calmed by educating it through counter-suggestions when he comes into contact with real life.

In the beginning a man has to train his mind with effort to this way of thinking. It may not come spontaneously. Are we seeing God when we do our Japam (repetition of the Lord's name) from the very start? No, we have to place ourselves in a world of intuitive imagination. In course of time, the form of God we meditate upon will become a living reality to us. So also, by Seva (service) we will feel in time that those whom we serve are none else than God Himself.

This practice of Seva (service) would also bring into intimate contact all the heterogeneous elements in our national life that make combination impossible at present. In short it will make India a nation.

Our country is fast sinking into ignorance and poverty and misery. We have discarded a very large number of our countrymen as untouchables and unapproachables. As has been remarked by Swami Vivekananda, the doom of India was sealed the very day we coined the word Mleccha. And in one of his violent moods of patriotic fervour he proclaimed that for another fifty years we should throw away our gods and goddesses into the Ganges and worship the living God alone—the Virat—our nation.

The time is now most opportune for practising the ideal of Service. Never before has India seen so much misery and suffering as it sees to-day. Let us all therefore be ready to nurse the God in the form of suffering humanity. In all our fasts and vigils, in all our conferences and assemblies, let us all have this one aim of Indian national reconstruction in view—a reconstruction based on the realisation of Sri Ramakrishna—Jeeve Seva or service of living beings,—and then out of our land will arise heroes who will represent its best culture.

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## THE DOCTRINE OF EXPERIENCE AS THE ONE SELF

BY PROF. K. SUNDARARAMA AIYAR, M. A.

### III. THE INQUIRY INTO THE SELF—ITS EXTENT AND VALUE

OF the three great source-books of the Vedanta Doctrine of Experience, the *Sariraka-Mimamsa Sutras* of Vyasa is the one which attempts to present it as a complete and harmonious system. Without Sankara's Bhashya the Sutras would have remained a mystery outside the school of disciples to which it belonged. In the Bhashya itself there are numerous pitfalls, dark corners, lanes and alleys, shoals and depths where we are apt to get entangled if we discard the help of the enlightened disciples of to-day who preserve and can impart the spirit of the teaching and the traditions in which it is embodied. The doctrine is now as ever imperfectly understood by outsiders, and hence have risen all the controversial troubles and distractions among the champions of the different schools. The Bhashyas themselves are invariably taught to the disciples of each school by authoritative expounders and it would have been best that this ancient practice had been strictly adhered to, though it may seem intolerable or inconvenient in a turbulent, meddlesome, and

iconoclastic age in which democratic standards prevail in every department of life. But even before the present epoch of unflinching curiosity and wholesale publicity had arrived, Sankara's system began to be attacked by aggressive opponents of rival schools and was even then defended with zeal and effectiveness by its own eager and enthusiastic adherents. A great and even unrivalled polemical literature has grown up and is still receiving slight additions, but fortunately only at distant intervals of time.

The Maharshi Vasishtha, a mind-born son of Brahma who is regarded as the *first* living soul (*Prathama-jiva*) who realised the Self-Essulgence of the Innermost Bliss of the One Absolute Experience, has said:—"The one remedy for the never-ending, still-beginning disease of Samsara—*i. e.*, the successive lives of wandering in various regions of the phenomenal universe—is the inquiry 'Who am I?' 'Whose is this Samsara?' etc. It ceases when true discriminative knowledge is attained." When the first Sutra of Vyasa speaks of "the desire to know Brahman" (*Brahma-jijnasa*), the word *jijnasa* has been given the transferred—*i. e.*, not the actual, but the intended—meaning (not the *sakyartha*, but the *lakshyartha*), *viz.*, *vichara*, or act of inquiry. The reason given for the change is that desire is only a *feeling purely within* the mind, and not an *activity* expressing itself outside such as is implied in the attempt to know the absolute Self which is beyond the mind by instruction from, and discussion with, a qualified teacher. Now, we have to raise and answer the question whether the inquiry into, and exposition of, the Vedanta Doctrine of Experience—or Illumination Absolute which is to lead to the liberation from the phenomenal life of Samsara—is to include the entire range of controversial literature above referred to, —or only the Bhashyas of Sankaracharya together with the necessary explanations of such obscurities and difficulties as may arise therein with the aid which can be derived from his immediate disciples or others who have subsc-

quently rendered a similar service,—or lastly, only such simple personal instruction as the Guru (to whom the disciple resorts) thinks necessary and desirable for the attainment of the latter's aim of mental enlightenment and the resultant realisation of the self in truth and in spirit.

The answer is or seems simple enough—viz., the nature of the effort needed depends upon the present spiritual status or stage the seeker has attained in his journey towards the goal. But such an explanation is too vague and general to give satisfaction,—and so we must enter into more detail. For, we must not forget that the Vedanta is not a mere speculation or theory, or an occupation for learned leisure, but implies a life of practice according to a qualified Guru's instructions in order to gain certain spiritual values. The processes known as *Sravana* and *Manana* are together intended to serve as a method of *logical* and *metaphysical* inquiry into the contents of the Upanishads so as to ascertain the purport of their teaching in regard to reality and the true method of realising it. The process of *Yoga* or *Dhyana* consists in the practice of certain methods of mental concentration so that it might serve as a means to the Innermost Bliss of the Absolute Experience which is "One" only without a second, and which, when realised as truly taught by the Veda and Guru, will remove even while we are here, the miseries of life within the limits of the universe of phenomena.

All these processes may together mean much or little for the disciple, and that depends upon the disciple's own stage of spiritual development. In the case of one in a highly advanced stage, the teaching conveyed by such sentences as "not this, not this" (*neti, neti*), "here (i. e., in the Self) there is no plurality at all" (*neha-nanastikinchana*)—from the Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad—is enough to destroy the error (or illusion) that the external world of matter alone is real and to make the Innermost Bliss of Self shine in all its glory. It is such ad-

vanced disciples that Sankara has in view when he says in an oft-quoted passage:—"If such sentences as '*neti, neti*' are enough to produce the illumination of the Self in those who desire to get rid of the bondage of life in the world of phenomena, then the reading of the Three Prasthanas will turn out to be similar to the discovery of a rat by the process of digging out a whole mountain to its foundations underneath." It is only for the less advanced disciples that the Vedas intend—and in the measure proportioned to each—the processes of Sravana and Manana which prepare the ground for the practical processes which lead to the interior self-illumination of the Bliss which is one and absolute, and beyond all phenomenal limitations. We shall just mention two or three passages with a view to show with what unanimity the Upanishadic texts proclaim the truth, though the expressions used may slightly differ in different contexts according to local requirements. The *Kena-Upanishad* speaks of the Self within us as "the eye of the eye," "the ear of the ear," "the mind of the mind," etc., and then proceeds to give the significant and expressive teaching:—"Know *That* (the Self) alone to be Brahman, not *this* which you are engaged in serving with engrossing and absorbing diligence,"—this latter object being *external* and *material* in its own place, nature and extent, viz., the material body, the five senses and their objects, the mind, and, lastly, the personal god one worships and his images of all kinds. The Taittiriya Upanishad (Brahma Valli), the Mandukya-Upanishad, etc., give the same teaching in essence, though seemingly different. The former refers to the *five* sheaths (*Kosas*) of the innermost Brahman,—the latter to the *three* bodies (*sariras*) or conditions (*avasthas, sthanas or upadhis*) of the Brahman or Atman which is *Turiya*—i. e., the fourth, or the unconditioned. The numerical simplicity of the latter—*three* conditions or quarters (*padas*), instead of *five* sheaths (*Kosas*) as in the former—is only one of mere seeming. For, the *sukshmasarira* or *svapna-avastha* (of the Man-

*dukya*) includes the *second*, *third*, and *fourth kosas* (viz., the *pranamaya*, the *manomaya*, and the *vijnana maya*) of the Taittiriya. The *annamaya* and *anandamaya* of the Taittiriya correspond to the *jagrat* and *sushupti* of the Mandukya.

The distinctive feature of the teaching in the Mandukya Upanishad—that which is not brought out so clearly or fully in the Kena, Taittiriya, or any other Upanishad—is the contrast between the *vyashti* (separate, individual) and the *samashti* (collective, universal) aspects of the various conditions or bodies (and the personalities appropriate to each) in the phenomenal life of the universe. But the distinctions, whether of bodies or personalities do not affect the one absolute reality, the innermost Self, which is undifferentiated and nondual (*advaita*). Further, even in the phenomenal universe, the part (*vyashti*) is included in—and, therefore, not different from—the whole (the *samashti*). Furthermore, the individual (and small) personalities—the *vyashti jivas*—associated with partial conditions, bodies, or states in the phenomenal world are distinguished from the big personalities associated with the universal or collective aspects of the same world only to help the former in meditating (*Upasana*) upon the latter so as to attain to the spiritual fruits and developments thereby attainable. These methods of meditation are the various *Vidyas* (or *Upasanas*) taught in the Chhandogya-Upanishad. But in all these Vidyas, the consciousness of the difference between the individual (worshipper's) personality and his God's collective (or universal) personality forming the object of his worship remains persistent; and the aim in each and all of them is to reach the high status and gain the gifts—happiness, power, dignity, etc.—aimed at or attainable through their right and eager performance. In this connection we may point out two circumstances worthy of remembrance. In the first place, the three universal (or collective) personalities—and their appropriate methods of meditation—do not stand on the

same level. The Gods known as Vaisvanara (for *sthula-samashiti*, the collective *external* material body) and Hiranyagarbha (for the collective *internal* or mental body) are on a level far inferior to the supreme deity, the personal God known in India as Isvara (presiding over the *collective* causal body or *Karana-sarira*) who is the omnipotent creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe. The meditation on Vaisvanara leads to a kind of happiness only analogous though quantitatively superior, to what we ordinary men experience here without such meditation. The worship of Hiranyagarbha leads to the joys of Brahma-loka,—but the worshipper here has to wait till his deity's official duties cease, and then passes with the latter into the state of *Mukti* (liberation from phenomenal life in the universe). In the *second* place, all these processes of meditation are taught chiefly (or only) with a view to produce *Vairagya*, the absence of all desire or craving for all transient states of happiness in the worlds above, however superior to those allotted to us here. Some Vedantins, however,—but they do not belong to our Monistic school—claim that the worship and meditation of Isvara (the omnipotent and omniscient God who presides over the *collective* causal body or *karana-avastha*) leads to a permanent state of pure spiritual happiness in a high and exalted state of existence (or world) called Vaikuntha (or Kailasa) which is beyond all merely material—and therefore low and unsatisfying—associations, as being made of pure *Sattva-guna*, and not mixed up with the two other material substances known as *Rajas* (desire-element) and *Tamas* (the element of inactivity arising from incapacity to discriminate truth from error). Even granting that such a world (or state of existence) exists, it does not rise beyond the sense of separateness (or duality) existing between the divine creator and ruler and the creatures over whom he rules and dominates with unquestioned sway. The Upanishad distinctly states:—"Fear exists so long as there is a second"; "When Unity is perceived, where is



ignorance or sorrow?" Only when the sense of separateness arising from the idea of pluralism (i. e., from the existence of the individual selves, the worlds above and below, and the supreme personal Lord of the universe) vanishes can we transcend the state of Samsaric wandering and reach the Innermost Bliss of Self, the One only without a second.

All that we have said above may be summed up by referring to the various grades of aspirants (*adhikaris*) after spiritual progress and values recognised in the Vedanta. *First*, we have the one who has reached the highest stage (*uttamadhikari*)—referred to in a passage above quoted from Sankaracharya's *Paramartha-Sara*—who, the moment his teacher explains the true purport of one (or more than one) such passage as "*Neti, neti*," attains to liberation from the bondage of material existence and realises the Self in all its glory. *Secondly*, we have one in the middle stage (*madhyamadhikari*) who is taught the four Maha-Vakyas (great sentences) in their full significance, and that is followed by the intended result, viz., the same liberation and self-illumination as before. The best known of these Maha-Vakyas is *Tat-tvam-asi* (That thou art), and is ordinarily designated as the *Upadesa-Vakya*, "the sentence containing the instruction" regarding the one absolute reality, the Innermost Bliss (of Love), the Atman. The teaching is followed by the disciple's proclamation of his self-illumination as contained in what is known as the *Anubhava-Vakya* (the sentence proclaiming the experience)—viz., "I am the Brahman" (*aham-Brahma-asmi*). *Thirdly* we reach the man in the lowest stage among the aspirants after the ultimate knowledge of the Vedanta,—the *adhamadhikari*, for whose benefit the Bhashyas on the "Three Prasthanas" are fully and at length taught so as to remove all doubts and difficulties and thus to enable the seeker after the absolute Experience, the one Self, to devote himself, without haste and without rest, to the practical methods leading to the same final accomplish-

ment as before. *Lastly*, there is one in a stage lower than the lowest (the *adhamadhama-adhikari*) in which the mind of the seeker is ever apt to be influenced by the objections advanced against the Monistic Doctrine of Experience by the followers of Pluralism in one of its numerous forms and by the arguments by which they seek to establish their own theories and creeds. Such a man is ever engaged in the interesting pastime and absorbing pursuit of endless logomachy and logic-chopping, but he never advances a step while here towards the attainment of the goal of life. He is the counterpart of the European type of philosopher whose supreme aim is ever to investigate and build up a synthesis and system, but never to reach or scale the pinnacle of a wisdom which enchants and enchains us both by its source in the Holy Vedas (as Schopenhauer himself calls them) and through our direct and soul-filling contact with those teachers and sages of to-day (and of the past) who represent the continuous and unbroken chain of an inspiring and elevating tradition which loses itself in the loving and gracious heart of the Supreme Lord of the Universe.

## RELIGIOUS BASIS OF INDIAN LIFE\*

BY SWAMI SHARVANANDA

TO understand the soul of a nation one should study the internal as well as the external aspects of the history of that nation. Such a study is essential for us to see what constitutes the soul of India.

The history of our race goes back to scores of centuries; it is older than the Vedas which, according to some Western scholars, might be dated about four thousand years before Christ, but, according to our traditions, several thousands of years before the Christian era. Wherein lay the soul of the nation? How did it mani-

\*Notes of a discourse given at the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras.

fest itself before, how is it manifesting itself now, and what will be its future destiny?

One thing that was predominant over all others in the thought-life of the ancient Indo-Aryan race was its search for the Truth. Throughout the period of the Rig-veda the lives of those who are known to us as Rishis (seers) were moulded by the spiritual ideals. They realised through their intuition and inspiration that the material values of life would not stand the scrutiny of reason and would not be eternal. While the other nations of the world were groping in the dark, the ancient sages proclaimed to the Hindu society—"Hear! O Ye Children of Immortality and all those who reside in the upper spheres! I have realised that Supreme and Eternal Being who is beyond all darkness, and by knowing Him alone one can transcend death and attain the *summum bonum* of life." It was on this principle of realisation that the whole Hindu society was built. This was its bed-rock. This was the keynote of the entire Hindu culture and civilisation. The scheme of society was formulated in such a way that every individual would be helped to progressively realise the highest ideal. By this means men in different grades of evolution were helped to rise higher and higher, through a graduated series of discipline, cultural and spiritual, till they became perfect.

First of all, the Aryans placed before the whole society the Mantra-Drashta or the Seer as their ideal. He was the Paramahansa, the man of God-realisation. They also saw that men could be divided into four types according to their Gunas (qualities). First came the man who was evolved to a very high degree both intellectually and spiritually. He was the Sattwic man. Next came the man of prowess whose chief characteristics were high ambition and intense activity and who had also a taste for intellectual and spiritual culture. He was the Rajasic-Sattwic man. Then there was the man whose mind and heart were not so developed but who was self-

centred—the Tamasic-Rajasic man. And lastly was to be found the Tamasic man who was full of ignorance and inertia. These types were respectively called the Brahmin, the Kshatriya, the Vaisya and the Sudra. They form the four Varnas (*lit.* colours). Varna here means the colour of their Sukshma Sarira (mental make-up). These four types are also found among the Gods, the angels, the animals and the plants.

The rules of conduct that were laid down for these four Varnas to suit their natural capacities were called Dharma. They were the laws which governed the national life in India. Dharma is that which upholds and sustains life. In this sense every man in his own position—at his stage of evolution—has a particular Dharma by performing which he can develop himself and ascend higher and higher the ladder of evolution. The Tamasic man has to develop his Rajasic nature and the Rajasic man in turn his Sattwic nature. The Brahmana was kept as the ideal to be reached by one and all. He was enjoined not to have any earthly possessions. He should have only Tapodhana—the wealth of Tapas or austerity. He was honoured even by the kings. He was the master of his inner self, whereas a king is a master only of the external world. The highest honour was given not to the wealthy or the powerful but to the spiritually great. The duty of a Kshatriya was to rule and protect the country. He was the pillar of the civic life. He had to do his duty as a humble servant of God and his people. The moment he considered himself the master of his people and tried to selfishly enjoy special rights and privileges, he was considered to have fallen from his duty. His work was of a Rajasic nature. The Vaisya was the banker of the society and he was given the third place of honour. He was to look after the trade and industries of the country. His intellect and heart were not sufficiently cultivated to understand the higher ideas and ideals of life, but on him depended the growth and accumulation of the material wealth in the

country. Lastly came the Sudra who had very little developed his heart and mind. To him was allotted the physical labour of the society. The whole Samaj (the civic commune) was considered as the Virat. Puruṣha (Cosmic Being), the Brahmana being the head, the Kshatriya the arms, the Vaisya the trunk and the Sudra the feet. Each of these is a necessary part of the body and does an allotted function for its protection and preservation.

Spirituality was kept alive by concrete examples. The man of spirituality, the Brahmana was most honoured and adored. "He who realises the Infinite before the dissolution of the body is the real Brahmana"—declared the Upanishad. Again it was found that the four Varnas could be well maintained if they took advantage of the principle of heredity. The Brahmana would find it helpful to develop his Brahmanical tendencies if he is in Brahmanical environments. The Varnas which were classified according to Gunas (qualities) were now formed into Jatis (castes) by birth. This was an experiment done by the ancient Rishis. These castes, as has been said before, had their allotted duties to discharge. The division of labour was made according to the natural bent of mind of the individuals. And these natural tendencies were tried to be fostered by favourable environment and heredity.

Most of the ancient Indians lived in the villages. In the centre of the village was the temple. Round the temple were a few houses of the Brahmanas whose sole duty was to worship, to study the Scriptures and to teach them. They imparted education freely to all who sought it. They lived on alms. Then came the landlord and his people—the Kshatriyas and their families. They would run the administrative machinery of the government in the village and exercise both the judicial and executive functions. Beyond the houses of the Kshatriyas were the houses of the Vaisyas and the Sudras. The temple

which formed the centre of the village drew the attention of every one of its members and reminded him of his spiritual ideal and goal of life.

Dharma (duty), Artha (wealth), Kama (desire), and Moksha (liberation) are the four objects of life. Dharma is the basic and guiding principle of spiritual and secular life. Each Varna had its own Dharma which had to be done not with selfish motives, but only for Dharma's sake. Having done his Dharma he should try to acquire wealth to satisfy his desires. What is the nature of these desires? God says—"I am Kama which is not in violation of the laws of Dharma." Unless our desires are satisfied, our mind will not turn inward. One will not get Vairagya or spirit of renunciation unless one finishes with desires, having slowly given them up by discrimination. Desires cannot be quenched by satisfying desires, just as fire cannot be extinguished by pouring ghee into it.

Now, another great advantage of the division of society into Varnas or Jatis was that it minimised the conflicting aspects of life, such as animosity, competition and the so-called struggle for existence. Contentment will exist only when the needs are minimised and opportunities for meeting the few needs are available. In the ancient Hindu society the ideals of self-sacrifice, renunciation and social service minimised the needs of the people. Their ideal was not how much they should possess but how little they should. There was also ample opportunity to meet those wants. As a consequence people had enough of leisured quiet and scope for a contented life for the culture of the spirit.

As was mentioned before, the whole nation lived in the villages, except for a few who were in the royal cities of the land. As a consequence political catastrophes never seriously affected the economic, social or mental life of the people. Their real king was Dharma. Even crowned heads had to bow down to them for fear of being

dethroned and sent out of the country. We have instances to show that the subjects rose against the kings who did not observe their Dharma. The whole nation could not be exploited for any military ambition. That is why the Hindus were never a conquering race ; and the term "mild Hindu " has come to be a term of reproach in the eyes of the modern world. But really in this mildness lies the glory of our Indian nation. We have never been ambitious and greedy. Of course there were some kings who even performed Yagnas (sacrifices) to enable them to conquer their neighbours but the nation as a whole never responded to their bugle call. In India alone it was possible for a peasant to till his field with equanimity even within the sound of the booming cannon!

Five are the elements of national life—unity of race, culture, religion, common political interests and geographical position. In all great nations one or other of these factors is seen to be more predominant than the others. The ancient nations laid more emphasis on the cultural, racial and religious unity, while the modern nations put more stress on political interests and geographical position than on the other elements. In the modern sense of the term the Hindus were never a nation. The whole country was like a big continent spread out over a very vast area. Various kings ruled it. Various languages were spoken. But the national spirit was in the plane of culture. Every Hindu, whether he was north Indian or south Indian, had his guiding principle of life in Dharma which was prescribed in the Vedas. The main purpose of the nation was to intensify the culture and not merely to bring about political unity, though a common culture contributed to such a unity. This is seen by a study of the history of the Vedic, Puranic and Buddhistic ages.

The external policy of our Indian nation lay in the spread of its spiritual civilisation in other parts of the world. Preachers and scholars went to different parts

of the world such as China, Arabia and Greece. Pythagoras, a contemporary of Buddha, was very much influenced by Indian thought. There is a belief that he himself came to India. Some of the doctrines of the ancient Greek philosophers are like the echoes of those of the ancient Indian philosophers. Alexander's invasion opened a channel for the flow of our culture. In Asoka's time the Buddhist missionaries went far and wide even to Syria and other distant places. It is believed that Jesus belonged to a branch of the Brotherhood of the Buddhistic religion and also came to India. There is a monastery in Tibet by name Himis Monastery. A Russian traveller has taken some records from there and published a book called "The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ." The doctrine of Trinity and of Confession and even the symbol of the Cross had some remote connection with Buddhism. The Swastika symbol of the Buddhists is very similar to the Cross. Even in other branches of thought like astronomy and astrology, mathematics and science, other parts of the world are deeply indebted to India.

India thus rose to a glorious height in the past, but this was also followed by national decadence. And during the times of such decadence some great hero arose and gave an impetus to the national life, so that its mission might be fulfilled. All the great heroes of India were spiritual heroes--great men of Self-realisation. All the great reformers and epoch-making men, in the past as well as in the present, have been men of spiritual eminence. It was only they who could command and lead our Indian people. Such heroes are enshrined in the heart of the nation as Avataras and Acharyas. They have awaked the soul of the nation in a remarkable manner.

The Westren civilisation that has come into contact with ours since the beginning of the last century dazed the eyes of our people for some time. They tried to imitate the West. But imitation is not life. Great



souls were born to guide the nation in its right path and to remind it of its purpose. The present conflict in India is not mainly one of political interests. It is on the other hand almost solely a conflict of ideals—a clash between political adjustment and national autonomy on the one side and spiritual development and expression of her cultural soul on the other. What the future will be we cannot say. But this alone is sure that if India lives to-day in spite of a thousand years of political servitude, it is because it has to fulfil a mission to the world. Whenever any aggressive civilisation came into contact with ours, it was greatly influenced by it. This often resulted in cultural developments like Sufism which is nothing but the impress of the Vedanta on Islam.

To-day India is not the India of the Hindus only. Different nations and religions and cultures have come to our land : What is to be its future ? India is the world in miniature and in it are going to be solved the problems of the whole world. To-day national interests are very closely associated with international ones. The path for a federation of nations is now being attempted to be made. This can be successful only if there is a mutual goodwill and realisation of the solidarity of life. Universal brotherhood is possible only when society becomes ethical and sufficiently developed to feel the unity of all life. Our ancient sages discovered this unity and its knowledge must be applied to our national life to-day.

Indian nationalism can be built only on a religious foundation. The policy of "Live and let live," based on the so-called spirit of toleration must be superseded by a positive respect towards all religions. All of us in India must now realise that the different religions in the land are but different paths leading to the same goal. Then alone can there be real harmony. India is going to establish and develop this harmony and proclaim it to all the nations of the earth. And in this way India is going to have a cultural conquest of the whole world.

## THE ASCENT AND THE APEX OF VALUES

BY K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI, B. A., B. L.

THE life of the animal is in the senses ; the life of the man is in the mind ; the life of the saint is in the soul. The raising of the plane of life is the real work of the soul in the universe. The secret of such rise is in unselfish love, in *Bhakti* (devotion). Man has to rise through the lower loves into the higher loves. He must learn to need God as he needs food or water or air. To attain to that height of devotion, he must go through the lower forms of devotion such as image worship, ceremonial worship (*Vaidhi Bhakti*), etc. God reveals to us His very Self through our *Ishta Devata*. The whole universe not only consists of symbols of God but is itself a symbol as well as a manifestation of God. By such training in love—and love needs training and culture like all other things in life—we can attain true devotion of the higher type which knows no fear and no bargaining and which is the outer body of inner bliss. The symbol stimulates the mind into bliss as a grain of sand irritates the oyster and generates a pearl. By such ascent in love we reach that supreme point where lover, love and Beloved are one in Bliss.

Religion is not due to mere ancestor-worship or mere worship of powers of nature but is due to the natural and innate seeking of the soul to transcend the limitation of the senses. The search for the Absolute is regarded by some as a vain endeavour. How is the Absolute more incomprehensible than nature with a capital *N* or humanity with a capital *H*? The Absolute is the Real Man, the Essential Man, the Real Nature, the Essential Nature. Man is truly Man when he rises above the sense-objects, the senses and the mind. The Atman is the one permanence in relation to which the eternal flux of things

goes on ceaselessly. *Maya* is but a compendious name for this universal flux, this cosmic becoming. The Vedanta is neither optimistic nor pessimistic, but is practical and pragmatic. Only its utilities are the eternal and blissful utilities of the spirit. *Nivritti* (renunciation) is as strenuous as *pravritti* (activity). It is the strenuousness of the Godward life. The calm of the bird on the balanced wing is an even greater effort of energy than the beating of the wings. *Maya* (ignorance) is not meant to be our eternal prison. *Vidya* (knowledge) is the road from the prison of *Maya* to the palace of *Mukti* (freedom). The adepts in renunciation become the adepts in realisation. We must not forget that the affirmations of the various schools of philosophy and their controversies—often bitter and biting—about the goal of life should not blind us to their common and basic affirmation about the freedom and the immortality and the blissfulness of the soul in its true nature above the limitations of the world and the body and the senses.

The glory of the Vedanta is in its affirmation, its universality, its *Sadhanas* (spiritual practices) and its goal. Its affirmations are the eternal and blissful nature of the Atman, the omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience of God, His immanent and transcendental nature, and the nature of liberation as a realisation. From this its cosmology necessarily follows and is as clear and convincing as its metaphysics. The *Vivarta Vada* (the doctrine of superimposition) is its cosmological affirmation from the one end—the plane of the Absolute. The *Parinama Vada*—that the universe is not blind matter or energy but is the *Parameswari Sakti* (Divine Power) in the course of its explosive, creative, and rhythmical evolution—is its cosmological affirmation from the other end. Two other necessary corollaries are Karma and reincarnation. The interrelatedness of soul and matter is a result and a cause. Animal instinct and human intelligence are but two radii from the same reincarnating mind. There is a line of Karmic ancestry as there is a line of physical

ancestry. *Avidya* (ignorance), *Vidya* (knowledge), *Mukti* (freedom) and *Ananda* (bliss) sum up life, super-life and Eternal life.

From these affirmations naturally comes the universality of the Hindu faith. All the faiths of the world find their place in it as the stars in the sky. It gives the most satisfying and satisfactory basis for ethics and psychology. We must love all for all are one. The soul is self-luminous and so it illumines all including the mind. The Vedanta is not mere creed or dogma or ritual or symbolism or ethics or psychology or cosmology or metaphysics but is all this and more. It describes not only hell, earth and heaven but also the supreme bliss that is above the mind as well as the senses. It affirms the Impersonal God as well as the Personal God. It shows the nature of the supreme cause and the identity of cause and effect. It explains the relation of the noumenon and the phenomenon in a most rational and convincing manner. It appeals equally to the worker, the lover, the mystic and the sage. It embraces all types of moods and methods. It reconciles free-will and determination. We are potentially free and externally bound. As sharers in the continuity of nature we are subject to necessity; but by the realisation of Brahman we become free or rather, we realise the ever-existing freedom of bliss and bliss of freedom.

Thus the Vedanta has its own beautiful and perfect theology, cosmology, psychology, eschatology and ethics. Brahman is the supreme Absolute; it is the underlying principle of life and evolution; it is in a relation of oneness or lordship to the soul, according to the plane of realisation attained by us; the soul works up to it through birth and death and the *Sadhanas* (spiritual practices) are meant as means for such attainment. Among such *Sadhanas* are Yajna (sacrifice), Dana (charity) and Tapas (austerity). The Vedanta contains an infinite treasury of *Sadhanas*. It leads the soul from plane to

plane of realisation till the soul stands on the apex of the Kailasa of the One and Eternal and Infinite Satchidananda (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute).

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## THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY IN CIVILISATION\*

BY PROF. S. RADHAKRISHNAN, M. A.

“A civilized nation which has no metaphysics is like a temple decked with every kind of ornament, but possessing no holy of holies” (Hegel). Hegel does not mean by “metaphysics” here epistemology or logic, but a definite theory of the universe, a world-view, what Plato would call a synoptic vision of reality, which takes into account not only the movements of matter, but the theological attitudes of men, and which does justice to every side of human experience. Every civilization implies such a metaphysics, even as it has its art and literature, social and religious life. The philosophy of a particular nation will reflect the general temperament of its people, and will bear special reference to the problems of the age when it is formulated. Each system of thought has its own formulas, its own characteristic applications and phrases, its own way of encountering the new problems which always come up in life and thought. It does not, however, mean that there are no universal interests or any objectivity in truth. Simply because the way in which the problems are proposed and the forms in which the solutions are presented vary, we cannot conclude that ultimate reality changes its nature with its temporal course or local setting. Philosophy, as a study of reality, is subject to evolution. Our knowledge of reality grows, but it does not necessarily follow that the real itself as distinct from the actual is evolving.

\*The report of an address delivered at the International Philosophical Congress held under the auspices of the Harvard University, U. S. A. Reproduced from the *Hindu* of Saturday, the 30th October 1926.

ing. As we are finding it increasingly difficult to account for the cosmic evolution on the principle of mechanical adaptation to environment, we will find it equally difficult to explain completely the history of philosophic development on the basis of the temperament of the thinkers and the nature of their immediate surroundings. There is, all through, pressure of the absolute ideal, the constraint of the objective.

I agree with Professor Dewey in thinking that philosophy, or our knowledge of reality, is psychologically mediated. The individual thinker is not merely reason naked and undefiled. His rational character is an element in a complex setting. Any human being is not an abstract entity, a mere mind or mechanism, but a product of history, with his roots in a long racial, social and ancestral past. History makes him what he is, and determines his way of approach. The point at which the world presses on him varies with his geographical position and his historical environment. The problems which face a philosopher in China at the present moment are different from those which engage the thinkers in this country. The conditioning forces of geography and history enable us to understand the whole course of thought, Eastern and Western, their accents and emphases, their variations and developments.

Philosophy is not simply a theoretical counterpart of the social and spiritual life of a people, but it has a formative function. From the time of the Upanishads in the East and Plato in the West, it has been the task of philosophers to guide the development of the people by formulating ideals and pointing out which of the experiences are to be regarded as central for human life. Philosophy is not a mere reproduction of the facts of life, but is essentially creative in the sense of transforming life. The philosopher meditates on the deeper problems, and the people at large absorb the results of his inquiry. A civilization is a philosophy concretized.

'There are thinkers of the present day who ask us to purge philosophy of all interest in morals and society. It is, however, impossible for a true philosopher to eliminate himself entirely from his surroundings. But he should adopt an attitude of detachment and dispassion. It requires a spacious and sensitive mind to understand the different attitudes of men, their ideals and aspirations, and to guide them to their purpose. If we are to get a comprehensive and synoptic vision, we must step aside for a while, and watch the procession. To be able to transform life, we must transcend life, not for the sake of transcending, but for the sake of transforming it. Philosophy is first to be contemplated before it is worked out. The recognition of the ideal is the first step, while its slow realization is the work of centuries.

It is not necessary for me to give you any illustrations from history to show how a philosophy has a true organic relation to its environment. Professor Taylor has already done it. It will be more useful to show how a system of philosophy at the present day, if it is to be adequate and alive, should be relevant to our present problems, which are in a sense unique. Our main interest as a Congress of Philosophy is not so much academic and antiquarian, as contemporary and creative. I believe that there has been no age in the history of the world so full of interest and anxiety to the thoughtful as is the present age. The determining factor in the present situation of the world is the role of science. Modern science is breaking down barriers and is creating common interests. The thoughtful in every nation are faced by the same problems. The philosophy of the future is likely to be of a less provincial character. The new mathematics, the new physics, the new psychology are revolutionising accepted notions of space and time, matter and mind. A re-thinking of the problems of the borderland has become urgent. Apart from the difficulties in the world of pure theory there are other interests of life which are demanding attention. The world is becoming

outwardly uniform, though not yet inwardly united. The shrinkage of space is raising its own problems. The East and the West are becoming next-door neighbours, but not yet understanding friends. We are anxious for world-unity, but are not prepared for getting rid of the habit of mind which makes for world-discord.

When we turn from international to national concerns, our problems are not less acute. Democracy is passing through a testing time. Fascism in Italy and Bolshevism in Russia are only two examples. The class conflicts in the economic world point to an unstable social equilibrium. The theory that society is a piece of mechanism which will adjust itself automatically through the operation of economic forces of freedom of contract and competition, is steadily losing ground. The workmen claim higher wages and more leisure, with facilities for education and enlightenment, recreation and relaxation. But they do not know how to make constructive use of their leisure, and are devising expensive ways of killing it.

In domestic relations, the upsetting of conventional standards is causing excitement. There is a lack of understanding between the older and the younger generations. In the traditional codes men have claimed freedom for themselves and have demanded discipline for women. Sometimes men set at rest all bickerings by referring to the natural inferiority of women. But women are coming into their own, and are insisting with great force and—I am sorry to say—much success on becoming our equals. We seem to be more anxious for equality than for quality. It is not very modern for a man or a woman who is sick of his or her partner to take another, but what is modern is a philosophy in justification of it. We have had wickedness with us from the beginning of human history. But recently we have learned to give the old habit the new name of self-expression, under life. We are regularising irregularities in matters of sex.



When we come to personal religion, we see an extraordinary amount of restlessness. The sciences of psychology, sociology and anthropology are undermining the foundations of orthodox theology in every religion. We are not so much in need of philosophy as a critical analysis of knowledge, a discussion of essence and existence, or a pragmatist outlook with its insistence on methodology and futility of metaphysics, but the larger philosophy which will take up the results of the sciences and set forth a spiritual theory of the universe. The varied accounts of religious experience seem to support the view that God is but a shadow of the human mind, a dream of the human heart. An attitude of atheistic naturalism or humanistic idealism is becoming more popular. The textbooks of the past do not seem to be of much help in solving the problems of the present. No prophet of old, it is asserted, could have anticipated our difficulties, or understood them. Any attempt to re-interpret ancient faith to suit modern needs may show reverence for the past, but not intellectual honesty. Our modern educated young men have no use for religion as trust in God, or communion with the Unseen. We have built up our technique of society and are trying to live clean lives; and religion has some pragmatic value as an attitude of life making for social peace and betterment. In every religious community we have a large number of people who are avoiding the discomfort of thinking, and growing indifferent to the problems of the higher life. Others there are, who shut their eyes to the facts of science and modern knowledge; and like horses in blinkers, they go by the beaten track. The cultured stand by a vague social idealism. Many openly avow doctrines of selfishness in morals and anarchism in social life.

In every side of life, personal, social, national and international, the old ideals have ceased to carry conviction. The application of the expired method to religious experience has had unsettling results; mystics, we were told this morning, are highly suggestible folk, given

to externalising their private fancies. The new ideals have not come into being. Here is the chance for philosophy. Are we to drift, waiting for something to turn up? Or shall we undertake the spiritual direction of the community? The old science, the old theology, the old sex code, the old economic theory, the old political philosophy and the old international standards are doomed. We cannot revert to them. The fundamentalist attitude in all these departments has no future. If philosophy is not to abdicate its function, it has to face the challenge of the present situation, and quickly too. It is no use regretting the present unrest. We have to steer a middle course between orthodox theology and godless naturalism.

It is a welcome sign of the times that science, which has inflicted the wounds, is also trying to heal them up. Some of the greatest philosophers of the present day are scientific metaphysicians. They are not satisfied with the facile solutions of a crude naturalism. It is becoming increasingly evident that a scientific view of the world does not make God superfluous. The passing flux of the world is not like the heaving and hurrying, yet ultimately unprogressive, movement of an agitated sea. The course of life is not a series of accidents, but is an ordered ascent from the fresh beginnings of life up to man, and from the primitive uncivilized man to the more spiritual type. The world is tending towards deification, to use the phrase of Alexander. The subjection of the cosmic process to law, and its tendency to produce higher values suggest a Creative Principle operating throughout the course of nature, bringing about ever new and higher forms of life on the stage prepared for it by the lower. This creative urge, this immanent drive in things, this *nisus* towards increasing diversity and perfection, whatever we may call it, indicates the reality of an ultimate spirit which in religious terms is called God. Such a view is also in harmony with the religious history of the world. From the primitive savage, kneeling before some supposedly sacred tree or holy stone, thrilled with the

thought that somewhere at the back of created matter lies and vibrates a force, a Power beyond his knowing, into contact with which he must somehow come, down to the great faiths of to-day, men have understood that God is the reality behind and beyond and within the shifting panorama of nature and history.

The interpretation of this cosmic evolution, whether in terms of emergent or creative evolution, requires us to admit that God's creative activity is not confined to the significant stages in the evolutionary process, but inspires the whole onward march. God does not intervene to create mind or life or spiritual insight, but is working continuously. Creation is not an instantaneous act, but is an eternal process. The immanence of God which follows from this hypothesis is the pledge that evil and error, ugliness and imperfection are not ultimate. Evil has reference to the distance which good has to traverse. Error is the stage on the pathway to truth. Ugly is only halfway to a thing, in Meredith's phrase.

The human being has much in common with plant life and the animal world, but in addition has power to understand his place in the world's scheme and to share in the work of God. He can control his growth, as plants and animals cannot. Pre-human progress happened. Human progress can be willed. Each of us has a place in the great adventure. We can use the material with which we are supplied to promote our spiritual ideals. We have enough freedom to deal with the given material. Human development is not a mere passive unfolding of which each step is rigorously determined by the preceding, but is a process of active reconstruction, conditioned by the materials furnished by experience. Until the different individuals realize the purposes with which they are charged, the world-process is unfinished.

Some such view, it seems to me, will help to clear up our present confusion. Religion will not be a mere sanction for the rules of conduct. It is a vision of

reality, superior to the historical process. In religious life we endeavour to gain a foothold in the world of eternal values from which to dominate and transmute the life of time. Religion is not merely social service and vague humanitarianism, but confidence in the supremacy of a spiritual reality which gives us strength in the hour of need. It is the faith that though the waves on the shore may be broken, the ocean conquers nevertheless. It is not only a life transforming, but a life transcending. The world is suffering, not for lack of light, but for lack of power. We have a high moral tone, but not much moral fervour. We speak of brotherhood, but with little real brotherly love. We love humanity in the abstract, but pass it by in the concrete. We love the beggars on the stage, but not at the theatre-door nor even at the temple-door. The dynamic energy to make us live up to our ideals comes, not from the mind, but from the depths of the soul. Self-discipline is a necessary quality of moral life. If we do not cast out the devil from our nature, we cannot exorcise it from the society which it torments. We cannot be satisfied with social idealism, however divine it may be. We may be doing God's work all the time, but let us keep some free moments for self-examination and communion with the eternal. Prayers to the Deity now and then are not enough but we should also hold our souls in patience, and wait in silence for the answer to our prayers. Such an attitude is likely to develop a serenity of mind and poise which will not be disturbed by the shocks of circumstance. Endurance and reform and not indignation and destruction should be our ideal. There is no use in being condemnatory towards a sinner. We must stretch out to him the hand of sympathy and fellowship as a pilgrim who has been led astray. Every sinner has a future, even as every saint has had a past. The worst criminal has within him an indestructible potency of regeneration. He can turn over a new leaf, and gain a new start.

If this spiritual attitude controls our life from its apex to its foundation, then it will help to sanctify society itself. The secular and the religious aspects of life are not two independent departments, governed by independent laws, but relative distinctions within a larger whole. We should welcome the world of human appetites as the scaffolding from amid which the life of the spirit must rise. The purpose of the institution of marriage is, not mutual satisfaction, but enhancement of personality. There is a great saying in the Upanishads, "Not for the sake of the husband is the husband dear but the husband is dear for the sake of the spirit. Not for the sake of the wife is the wife dear, but the wife is dear for the sake of the spirit." We are not simply individuals, but members of society, and pursuers of spiritual ideals. Life is not merely a list of opportunities for self-satisfaction, but a set of obligations for realizing spiritual good. If life is to be lived merely from moment to moment, then there will be nothing to live for. Self-realization consists, not in the raw exercise of elemental passions, but in their sublimation.

Except in the pages of fiction we do not have two people agreeing with each other in tastes and temper, in ideals and aspirations. No two persons are alike. The differences are the materials which have to be worked into a harmonious whole. If the existence of incompatibility be a justification for separation, most of us would be divorced. No ! It is a challenge to a strenuous life. Marriage is the beginning of the problem, and has for its end the transformation of one's chance mate into a life-long comrade. Those who enter married life should be prepared for the exercise of patience and restraint. Women insist on equality ; they are welcome to do so. But, only let them impose their higher standards of discipline on men, rather than accept the lower standards of freedom which they rightly deprecate, or used to deprecate in men.

In the economic world co-operation should take the place of competition. We must give up the individualistic view, and look upon society as a system of mutual, though varying obligations held together by a common ideal. Every kind of function is valuable, so long as it serves the social good. Democracy does not mean equality of endowment of function, but equality of value as human beings.

Each man as man has a value which is unique, and a dignity which is inalienable. The workers are certainly entitled to the essential conditions of well-being, but should not forget that what is necessary for well-being is not simply easier circumstances, or more comforts of life and larger opportunities for pleasure, but inner harmony and spiritual poise. The great religious teachers speak to us of a peace which the world can neither give nor take away. Without serenity and poise, restraint and self-control we are not truly civilized, however great may be our outward accomplishments. A monkey trained to ride a bicycle and smoke a pipe is still a monkey.

In the world of international relations we are to realize that national, racial, religious imperialism does not make for peace. Unless we grow internationally minded, peace will not break out on earth. We cannot get rid of wars and rumours of wars simply by talking of peace and actually preparing for war. When a nation in the height of its power and the plenitude of wealth helps its weak neighbour even at the sacrifice of its interests, that act will bring peace nearer than all conferences and congresses on peace. We cannot accomplish spiritual ends by mechanical measures.

Our attitude towards races whom we are pleased to call primitive and savage must be one of sympathy. The primitive and the savage but for the grace of God are ourselves under much less favourable conditions. We should see in the differences of races and nations the

means by which humanity should progress through mutual service and enrichment to its complete, full-orbed development.

In the sphere of religion we cannot adopt the dualistic attitude that the plants in my garden are of God, while those in my neighbour's garden are planted by the devil which we should destroy at any cost. It is unfair to God and man to assume that He has entrusted His exclusive revelation to some one prophet, Buddha, Jesus or Mahomed, expecting all others to borrow from him, or else suffer spiritual destitution.

The present needs make upon philosophy a demand to put forth a constructive theory of life fair to science and faithful to true religion, a philosophy which would insist on the supremacy of a spiritual reality and the practice of self-discipline and self-sacrificing service. That to my mind seems to be the role of philosophy in the present stage of the history of civilisations.

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## PESSIMISM AND MAYA-VADA

(A Correspondence)

BY PRINCIPAL KAMAKHYA NATH MITRA, M. A.

The following correspondence between an esteemed seeker after truth, a retired Judge in the Bombay Presidency and the present writer may prove helpful to many readers of the *Vedanta Kesari*.

### THE LETTER

..... Bombay,  
29—8—26

Dear Sir,

I sent for your "Pessimism"\* and the card sent to me by the Mylapore Math shows that you are probably the M. whose writings in the *Prabuddha Bharata* have been for many years a source of instruction to me. If I am correct, in identifying you as M., you have had the rare good fortune of knowing two great teachers at first hand, and I take the liberty to place some of my difficulties before you.

1. The Yoga Sutras say, "*Dhukham eva sarvam vivekinah*" (II—15)—"To the discriminating everything is painful," and that is the burden of your essay. But there is an Upanishadic text to the effect that this world is one of both *Punya* and *Papa*, (to use Shakespeare's words) of mingled yarn, both good and ill together, therefore not wholly evil. The Upanishads also mention numerous worlds, and you are certainly familiar with the doctrine of gradations expounded again and again by Plotinus. You also tell us that "a *higher* moral life has evolved from a *lower* life of morality" (page 11), and also that manhood "lies in striving after a *better* life". Why may it not be held, therefore, that morality has

\*Pessimism and Life's Ideal (A Reprint from the *Vedanta Kesari*)—  
Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras.



evolved from Nature in which it was involved, like the great maternal love shown to their offspring by fur-seals who go out over 200 miles to fetch food for them and actually shed tears if they are wounded. *The question becomes one of degree* : if a higher morality from a lower, why not morality itself from Nature ?

2. I wonder whether you have read Jalal-ud-din Rumi in the original or in any translation. I have had the good fortune of reading both his Masnavi and Shams Tabriz in the original, though I have not yet completed my study. He is full of the most fervid love. Can one believe that Prakriti (primal cause of matter and mind) is evil and a source of unmitigated misery, and love God with such fervour ? If love is a good thing, how does a Maya-vadi, of the kind you commend, manage to have it ? What does he say to himself in order to inspire himself with love for God ? If he says to himself, "My God, you have placed me in an evil world out of which the sooner I get out the better," can he feel love for God ? If he says "I am That", how can he explain why he finds nothing but evil around him, or appearances with no reality behind them ? How can the one Real conceive that all His projections or emanations are unreal ? What sort of feeling does the Maya-vadi (a believer in the doctrine of Maya) possess ?

3. At page 37 you give a description of the Self which implies there is Identity in Contradiction. Why may there not be such Identity in the contradiction even of Avidya ? May not Night be useful for realising the Day ? May it not be thus serving a useful purpose ?

4. To master the Vairagya Sadhana (practice of renunciation), what means have you been employing ?

5. Can you from your own experience give me any hints on the subject of Self-realisation ?

With pranams,

Yours sincerely,

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## THE REPLY

Rajendra College,  
Faridpur (Bengal),  
7th September, 1926

Dear Sir,

I cannot thank you sufficiently for the honour you have done me by going through my "Pessimism" and the still greater honour you have done me by writing a letter expressing your doubts and difficulties. I contribute to the *Prabuddha Bharata* occasionally but I am not the M. My full name always appears at the top of my articles. I did not have the good fortune of a first-hand knowledge of Sri Ramakrishna but I did have the rare privilege of coming in contact with Swami Vivekananda. I shall be much obliged if you will kindly read my articles entitled "Æstheticism and Ethicism" and "Mysticism—True and False" that appeared in the *Prabuddha Bharata* of May, 1925 and January and February, 1926. They will perhaps help you to understand something more of my position.

Now I come to the points in your letter.

To begin with, I may tell you that I take my stand not only on the Yoga Sutras but on all the schools of Philosophy of our country, the common factor of which is Pessimism with the resulting conceptions of absolute renunciation and *Moksha* (liberation). I also claim that all the religions of the world are pessimistic. For obvious reasons I have not taken into account two systems only, viz., Charvakism and the Purva Mimamsa of Jaimini. I refer you in this connection to the third para of page 30 and the fourth para of page 31 of my essay. I refer you also to the last para of page 8.

I have explained the world as a "vicious circle" throughout my essay, both scientifically and historically. For historical proof I refer you specially to pages 41 and 42. If we seriously think of the world as I have

represented it to be, we cannot but be pessimistic and *Vairagya-van* (endowed with renunciation). *A vicious circle is essentially an evil... There is no fun in it.*

*Papa* and *Punya* (evil and good) are terms that are applicable to men only. Nature externally considered is unmoral, that is, neither moral nor immoral. Internally considered, that is, considered with reference to human life, it is immoral. What I have said about the world is this : "He (the pessimist) knows the world as it is and does not expect from it any permanent good. The world sometimes becomes better and sometimes worse. It becomes better sometimes *not by reason of itself but in spite of itself*—by reason of the force (*moral force which is anti-natural, anti-worldly or other-worldly*) that acts against it. . . . . No millennial or melioristic hope this. . . . *a vicious circle again*" (p. 11, first para.). *A vicious circle again is wholly an evil. There is no fun in it.* I am afraid, there is a confusion in your mind about the meaning of the word "world". You cannot use the same word in senses diametrically opposite. *The moral world is the other world. It is nowhere else in space.* The two voices must be sharply distinguished. *Pravritti* (the desire for enjoyment) must be distinguished from *nivritti* (renunciation). What is called *pravritti dharma* is a mixture of *pravritti* and *nivritti* or a state of civil war. This must be transcended. Pure *nivritti* should be our goal. This is the *only humanism* in which I believe. There can be no higher human interest than this. The world's tendency is to drag us down. That is why human things naturally tend to degenerate. The upward movement and onward movement is a struggle against this natural tendency. A very few individuals succeed in this struggle. Even those who do not completely succeed gain a good deal in life, for moral value is supreme. Moral life is its own reward. How it will influence other men and how long its effect will continue is no consideration at all. This is the secret of *Karma Yoga* or *Nishkamakarma*

(the path of self-less work). It is based on pessimism. The pessimist knows that the world is like the dog's tail. You may hold it straight for some time but it will curl up again. Our centre therefore should be in ourselves and not in the world. This is the secret of personality. This is the secret of character—and this is the wisdom of India.

We must beware of the catch-word of "humanism". It is a decoction of the materialism of the West. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God,"—if this is not humanism, well, then, humanism is contemptible.

The Upanishads mention numerous worlds or *lokas* no doubt, or in other words there is a gradation or hierarchy in these Scriptures, but then they all belong to the world of Maya. Because there is no clear conception of Maya in Plotinus, therefore his Enneads are unsatisfactory and inconsistent. I quote the following passage in support of my view from an easily available book, viz., Weber's History of Philosophy : "Plotinus, it must be added, is not always consistent. Like his modern imitator, Schelling, he regards God, sometimes as the unity which is superior to all contrasts and therefore to the contrast between matter and mind, sometimes as spirit in opposition to body. The latter conception dominates his moral system. Asceticism and *Nirvana* (liberation) are the natural consequences of the view."

The philosophy of Plotinus is emanatistic pantheism. Our Advaita-vada (the doctrine of the One, or monism) may be called a cosmic pantheism (*vivarta-vada*). The meaning of *vivarta* (superimposition) is illustrated by the famous simile of the rope and the snake. It is the rope all the time. We think it is the snake due to our ignorance. Why?—we cannot say. Nay, the question "Why?" shows a confusion of thought, for this question can arise only within the realm of Maya (Time, Space and Causality). It is *anirvachya* (indescribable),

but we know, however, that Maya is *bi-lakshan* (contrary) and *tuccha* (contemptible).

Because a higher moral life has evolved from a lower life of morality, therefore it does not follow that morality itself has evolved from Nature. Much of what we call morality is not morality at all. It is *Sangs-kara* (instinct) which is very often mistaken for intuition even by philosophers. True intuition is different altogether. The true moral sense is very rare. Wherever there is the true moral sense there is the highest ethical ideal of absolute renunciation or abolition of the individual (ego) leading to a vision of the Absolute. *This is perfection and this perfection is attainable.* We have not like Hegel, in the incisive words of Dean Inge, "condemned both God and man to the doom of Tantalus". But as most of us cannot attain perfection at once we must struggle hard and pass in and through Nature. We must ascend higher and higher, pass through the world of Is to the full world of Ought by gradual steps till at last we reach the highest, or in other words, get out of the world of Maya altogether and become *Mukta* (liberated). This is the meaning of the evolution of morality but morality itself is a protest against Nature. I have laboured this point at great length from pages 13 to 17 of my essay. Perfect moral life is a complete break with Nature or the world. The flesh may be weak, but an honest man should confess his weakness and never seek to justify himself or sanctify Nature.

We have nothing to do with the walrus or the maternal love of any animal including the human being. This is blind emotion or Nature's trick. Morality or life's ideal has nothing to do with it. But because morality is anti-natural therefore it does not follow that whatever is anti-natural is moral. This is not logic. A mother without love for her offspring certainly is not a moral mother but then no more can a mother be called moral simply because she loves her child. The difference be-

tween moral life and natural life I think I have clearly proved to be not *one of degree but one of kind*. *Morality is unique*. As Swami Vivekananda has said somewhere — "*perfect morality is the same as Mukti*." The moment you have this intuition you understand the meaning of *Maya* and then you understand the meaning of *Brahman* or *Atman*. As Sankaracharya says:

*Maya-mayam idam akhilam hitwa  
Brahmapadam prabishasu veditwa*

(After renouncing this world of *Maya* enter into *Brahman*, understanding).

I am afraid, the emotional or love-and-beauty mysticism of the Sufis as distinguished from the Jnana form of mysticism of the Vedantist has caused some confusion in your mind. I have not read Rumi's *Masnavi* in the original but have gone through portions of it in English translations and have read some literature on Sufism. I have already pointed out the inconsistency in Plotinus. The same inconsistency is to be found in the Sufis and in the greatest Sufi poet, Jalaluddin Rumi. The Sufi's ethical ideal with the ideals of Fana (*Nirvana*) and Haquiquat (realisation of truth) is all right. That much of Neoplatonism and Sufism which is based on the Vedanta is sound. The other part is unsound.

What I have said about the inconsistency in Neoplatonism and Sufism is applicable *mutatis mutandis* to the various pluralistic systems of Indian Philosophy. Neither Sankhya's evolution (*parinamavada*) nor the Naiyaik's *arambha-vada* (theory of atomic agglomeration) explains the universe. And as there is no other explanation worth mentioning so there is no way out of *Maya-vada* (the doctrine of *Maya*).

If you want an epistemological proof of *Maya-vada* I can refer you to Kant, for I believe that *Maya-vada* can very well be deduced from Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, though Kant himself never went beyond dualism proper. *The progress of philosophy is through Kant*

*and Schopenhauer to Vedanta and round Hegel and his successors.*

To say that to struggle against Maya and to get out of it to realise *Brahman* implies dualism is to raise a frivolous objection. What I reject is false. I never reject the truth. To say that Brahman is Satyam (true) and Jagat (the world) is Mithya (false) is to say that there is only one truth and not two truths.

The Truth or the Absolute can never become. That which becomes is variable and so it is not the Absolute, whatever else it may be. This is the fundamental defect of Ramanuja's philosophy though his Ethics is all right. As for Hegel, his Metaphysics and Ethics are both wrong. His Absolute becomes and he rejects asceticism. As for emanation, it is also inconsistent with the idea of the Absolute\*.

✓ True love can arise from Maya-vada because all *bheda-buddhi* (differentiation) is Maya. Pluralism is false philosophy as no metaphysician can entertain the idea of more than one Absolute. That man alone can love truly who sees the Brahman or his own Self everywhere. As the Sufi lover said to his beloved : "I am thou". That *Maya-vada* and perfect love go together can be proved from the life of Swami Vivekananda, the greatest Maya-vadi of this age.

Love, rightly understood, is a good thing, but it is generally misunderstood. There can be no true love without a sound moral basis. In the words of Wordsworth : "Is love an unerring light and joy its own security?" Love-and-Beauty mysticism very often leads people astray. The erotic and bacchanalian symbolism

\*Just as *vivarta-vada* (the doctrine of superimposition) is illustrated by the simile of the rope and the snake, so emanatistic pantheism is illustrated by the simile of fire and its sparks. Now the sparks are but parts or fractions of fire but the Absolute or the Infinite has no part or fraction. The Absolute is *nishkalam* (without parts). This is mathematically demonstrable. Emanatistic pantheism is therefore false philosophy. Without *vivarta-vada* (the doctrine of superimposition) there can be no consistency in metaphysical speculation.

of a few saints degenerates generally into the ease-loving dilettantism of the morally loose. The safest path is that of austerity or stern self-discipline. It leads straight to the goal of *adwaita* which is Absolute Knowledge (*Jnanam*) and Absolute Good (*Shivam*).

I fail to understand how you see the doctrine of Identity in Contradiction in my description of the Self. That doctrine I utterly reject. At page 37 I have spoken of the grades of religious experience. That is a psychological question. Identity in Contradiction belongs to dialectic. The psychology of religious experience has nothing to do with the Hegelian hocus-pocus of Identity in Contradiction.

Identity in Contradiction is a mischievous doctrine. Its logical outcome is the false philosophy of optimism. A trace of this doctrine is visible in Sufism and Neoplatonism too, but fortunately Plotinus and the Dervishes were inconsistent with this false doctrine in their conception of the Ethical Ideal. This inconsistency saved them.

Love-and-Beauty Mysticism appears to be optimistic but it is not really so, for how do we account for the fact of asceticism in the lives of the true Love-and-Beauty Mystics? Asceticism is the logical consequence of Pessimism. Neither the true Vaishnavas nor the true Sufis are optimistic in their outlook on the world. God to them is the only Reality. They love God for God's sake. There is no shop-keeping spirit in their love.

The following extract from William James' Pragmatism gives a complete reply to what you say about night being useful for realising the day:

"Whoever claims absolute teleological unity, saying that there is one purpose that every detail of the universe subserves, dogmatizes at his own risk. Theologians who dogmatize thus find it more and more impossible, as our acquaintance with the warring interests of the world's parts grows more complete, to imagine what the one



climacteric purpose may possibly be like. We see indeed that certain evils minister to ulterior goods, that the bitter makes the cock-tail better, and that a bit of danger or hardship puts us agreeably to our trumps. We can vaguely generalise this into the doctrine that all the evil in the universe is but instrumental to its greater perfection. But the scale of evil actually in sight defies all human tolerance, and transcendental idealism, in the pages of a Bradley or a Royce, brings us no further than the book of Job did—God's ways are not our ways, so let us put our hands upon our mouth. A God who can relish such superfluities of horror is no God for human beings to appeal to."

For the last two questions (Nos. 4 and 5) I must refer you to a *Siddha Guru* (illumined teacher). As for myself, I am painfully conscious of my many imperfections, but I am sincerely trying to be a better man in the light of the ideal lives and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. May their blessings descend upon you !

With love and namaskar,

Yours sincerely,  
KAMAKHYA NATH MITRA.

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## MYTHOLOGY AND RITUALISM

BY SWAMI KUMARANANDA

**E**VERY religion has three parts—viz., philosophy, mythology and rituals. The mythology of any religion consists of stories about its God or gods, about its founder,—if it is founded by a person—and about its saints and heroes. And rituals are forms and ceremonies which are performed according to prescribed rules by the followers of all faiths. Mythology and rituals are very valuable assets to religion. In recent times a scientific study of these has been made by Western scholars whose views concerning them are worth examining.

Prof. Max Muller, the leader of what has been called the philological school of mythology, propounded the theory that myths can be understood principally through language. His system was based on the identification of the mythical terms, and hence of the myths in the various Aryan languages. This view was rejected when the anthropological school proved that identical myths exist among not only the Aryan but also the various non-Aryan peoples, and this is due to the prevalence of similar ideas and sentiments which recur at one time or other amongst all peoples with the evident regularity of mental law. There are some minor differences of opinion amongst scholars of this new school. Some hold that animism—the idea that every object possesses a spirit or soul—is the source of all religions. There is also a contention as to whether myth originated from ritual or ritual from myth. Everyone seems to take it for an axiomatic truth that God and soul are merely ideas which are highly evolved and which had their origin in some kind of primitive experience or imagination.

All theories of myths depend on the ideas prevalent at the time of the interpreter, and the anthropological

theory attaches itself to the theory of evolution. Since the Hindu idea of evolution differs in some important respects from the Western, our interpretation of myths also is bound to differ accordingly from the anthropological theory.

We believe that every evolution is preceded by an involution. The one presupposes the other. All motion is in a circle; it is the same Being that appears at the highest point of the circle as God who is at the zenith of all evolution, and as plants and animals in the lower stages of evolution. The unchanging Reality in every being is the Self or Atman which manifests itself more and more fully as evolution progresses. The goal of all evolution is the Atman which is Satchidananda—Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. Evolution is the process by which the body and mind become finer and consequently fitter instruments for manifesting the full glory of the Atman. All beings are striving for this end, whether they know it or not.

The arguments of some Western scholars in support of their theories about the origin of religion is that all myths contain certain irrational elements which are the remnants of primitive thought. They claim this as a clear indication of their theory that myths originated in a savage state of society and were afterwards sophisticated by poets and philosophers till they attained their present form.

The chief objection to this theory is that every religious experience, whether modern or ancient, points out unmistakably that God reveals Himself to the pure and devoted of all times and places. In India these experiences have been classified and arranged in a scientific manner. Anybody may test them; if he follows the prescribed methods, he will get the same results. Again there have been great Incarnations of God like Rama, Krishna and Chaitanya, who proclaimed to the world their divine message and to whom God was more

real than this world. There are, of course, minor differences between their teachings, but these are due to the fact that they adapted their teachings to suit the conditions that prevailed in their times. But the fundamentals of the teachings are the same. They all have shown how the soul can reach God—can “be perfect even as the Father in heaven is perfect.” It is, therefore, unbelievable that religion, as experienced and preached in essentially similar forms by different men in different times, originated in the primitive ideas of ghosts or spirits. There must be a Reality—God—that has given rise to various religious ideas and experiences.

Mythology tells man about the existence of a higher power and helps him in directing his mind towards the Divine. It is intended to popularise the truths about God and soul, no matter whether these truths were revealed through the communion of the soul with God or through the Incarnations of God. It is often interwoven with higher truths and valuable methods of spiritual disciplines as in the case of the Puranas of the Hindus. The mythological element in religion is essential for the religious education of the unsophisticated masses as it prepares their minds for the understanding of the abstract truths of philosophy. But the central core of all mythology is the Divine Reality.

Another unsound conclusion arrived at by some Western scholars is that ritualism is due to man's imitativeness. It becomes the custom of later people to imitate the rituals observed in the dim past by some primitive community or other. But this does not explain the extremely intricate and highly symbolical rituals that exist among the Hindus and various other religious communities. Rituals undergo considerable changes from time to time, unlike the fundamentals of religion, which are unchangable. The Hindus hold that highly spiritual men need not have any rituals, and rituals should be varied to suit different times and conditions.

If rituals are the outcome of imitation alone, those who follow them cannot set down rules by which these rituals have to be changed from time to time. Ritualism which often involves symbology is concretised religion for the beginners. The large majority of mankind can understand religion only through ritualism. Though it is not the essential part of religion, it is a necessary stage through which the aspirants must pass. There are many who never get beyond this stage. There are also many who think that they can extract the essence of religion without its form, and therefore do not even care to enter this stage. "Rites and ceremonies," says Sri Ramakrishna "are the receptacles that contain the germinating seeds of truth; and consequently every man must perform them till he reaches the central truth therein. The ancient rules and commands of our scriptures must be pruned and purged of all their accretions to make them suit the want of our modern times." We find in the light of these ideas that ritualism is a stage in the spiritual evolution of the soul.

As Swami Vivekananda has observed, truth is truth whether expressed in the language of angels or of poor humanity, or in the language of philosophy or of mythology and rituals. What philosophy is to those who are highly advanced in education, mythology and rituals are to the less cultured. These serve to popularise the abstract truths of religion, and their goal is the same ultimate Truth that is described in philosophy. They have served as great sources of inspiration to the vast majority of mankind for whom advancement in spiritual life would be difficult, nay even impossible without them.

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## KESHUB CHUNDER AND RAMAKRISHNA\*

(A Review)

BY VERITAS

THIS is a short pamphlet consisting of nine pages only by Mr. Jamini Kanta Koar, a missionary of the New Dispensation section of the Brahmo Samaj of Bengal. From the few introductory remarks it appears that the author is extremely nervous about the future of the Brahmo Samaj in general and the Church of the New Dispensation in particular. The sad plight of his Church is largely due to the schism after the ill-fated Cooch-Bihar Marriage and the establishment of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, but as the rapid growth of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement has effectually arrested the progress of the Brahmo Samaj as a whole and as the late Mr. Pratap Chunder Mazoomdar, the chief "apostle" of the New Dispensation failed to uphold the prestige of his church in America in the face of the whirl-wind campaign of Swami Vivekananda, and as further the Hinduising influence of Ramakrishna over Keshab did not escape the notice of even a distant observer like the late Prof. Max Muller, so Mr. Koar valiantly comes to the rescue of a lost cause and makes a frantic effort in his pamphlet to establish the "originality" of Keshab. Mr. Koar has no objection to the fact of Sri Ramakrishna's "pilgrimage" to Keshab's *tapo-vana*, for "it was," according to him, "like the ascetic John the Baptist seeking out the youthful aspirant Jesus," but what he seriously objects to is the statement that the idea of the mother-hood of God had been "borrowed" by Keshab from Ramakrishna. It is in order to dispose of this "story-telling" and this "pious yarn" that Mr. Koar has undertaken a little bit of historical research of which the pamphlet under review is the tangible

The work of research need not have been so seriously undertaken. In this country the Mother-hood of God is a common idea and that Keshab Chunder before his acquaintance with Ramakrishna had addressed God as Mother in some of his prayers and sermons is nothing strange. *But the most*

\*Brahmananda Keshub Chunder and Paramhansa Ramkrishna on the Motherhood of God—A historical statement. By Jamini Kanta Koar. Published by the Navavidhan Press, 3, Ramanath Mazumdar Street, Calcutta.

*important question is, since when did the Mother-hood of God become the most vital and dominant conception of the Church of the New Dispensation ?* To avoid this point is to avoid the main issue altogether. Lawyers sometimes argue like this when their case is very weak, but we expect better things from a missionary.

If any statement has been made by anybody to the effect that Keshab knew absolutely nothing about the Motherhood of God before he came into contact with Ramakrishna, then it must be inaccurate no doubt ; but as Mr. Koar has not quoted chapter and verse so we are not in a position to say whether the inaccuracy actually exists or it exists only in his heated imagination. But all that is neither here nor there. After all that may be said in favour of the "originality" of Keshab, the fact remains that Keshab is deeply indebted to Ramakrishna for the idea of the Mother-hood of God *as the most vital and dominant conception of his church*. That this is no "story-telling" or "pious yarn" will appear from the following quotations from some of the "apostles" of the so-called Church of the New Dispensations :

"The acquaintance of this devotee (Ramkrishna) which soon matured into intimate friendship, had a powerful effect upon Keshab's catholic mind. The very first thing observable in the Paramhansa was the intense tenderness with which he cherished the conception of God as Mother. To him the female principle in the Hindu idea of Godhead, *Sakti*, the incarnation of Force, popularly called Kali, was the Mother Supreme. . . . . And now the sympathy, friendship and example of the Paramhansa converted the Motherhood of God into a subject of special culture with him (Keshab). The greater part of the year 1879 witnessed this development. It became altogether a new feature of the Revival which Keshab was specially bringing about. However much European taste might dislike such a development, Keshab's religion perceptibly gained in popularity with Hindu society by this means." (pp. 357-359 First Edition—Life of Keshab Chandra Sen by Babu Pratap Chandra Mazoomdar).

"It was from the example of the Paramhansa's life that the idea of the Motherhood of God arose in the Brahmo Samaj. It was from him in particular that our Acharya (Keshab Chandra Sen) got the idea of invoking God with the sweet name of 'Mother' after the simplicity of a child and of praying to Him and of beseeching Him for every indul-

gence like a child. The Brahmo religion was a religion of knowledge and dry disputations before. The shadow of the Paramhangsa's life falling on it made the Brahmo religion more agreeable by removing its dry or arid features."— (Translated from the Life and Teachings of Paramhangsa Ramakrishna, in Dharmatatwa of 1st Aswin, 1809, Saka; p. 195; by Babu Girish Chandra Sen, a missionary of the New Dispensation Church.)

"Through an exchange of the religious feelings of these two high-souled persons the Brahmo Samaj has advanced much in the region of devotion. . . . . The charming play of Devotion and the idea of God's Motherhood now displayed in the Brahmo Samaj are principally derived from Paramhangsa Ramakrishna. That the worship of God as Mother, and adorations and prayers in those homely and common words in which Keshab was seen to indulge in his later days, were due to the high-souled Paramhangsa is known to many." (Translated from the Life of Keshab Chandra Sen, pp. 132-133, First Edition, by Babu Chiranjib Sarma, a missionary of the New Dispensation Church).

What does Mr. Koar say to all this ? Is it all "story-telling" or "pious yarn" ?

That the Motherhood of God is the most vital and dominant conception of the New Dispensation appears from the following declaration of Keshab himself and how it became so has already been shown in the extracts quoted above. Says Keshab :

"Let our readers accept the cheering message. A New Dispensation has come down upon the Brahmo Samaj which proclaims a new programme to India. Its chief merit is its freshness, and *its one watch-word is—God, the Mother of India. . . . . all its changes are rung upon that single word—God Mother.*" (Sunday Mirror, 1st February, 1880).

Thus is blown away the precious historical research conducted by Mr. Jamini Kanta Koar.

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## NOTES AND COMMENTS.

### INDIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD-THOUGHT

The ancient Greeks invaded India, attracted by her material wealth. And they were struck not only by her immense economic resources but also by the great wisdom of her holy men. However, in course of time all about the spiritual riches of India was forgotten in the West. And the Europeans came to look upon this country as a happy hunting ground for the adventurous fortune-seeker, and they rushed into it for the exploitation of its material resources. But some of the most cultured among them, who did not value worldly possession above everything else in the world, discovered to their astonishment the great wealth of India's wonderful culture—her art and architecture, religion and philosophy which always point to mankind the way to salvation.

A number of Western scholars interested themselves in the hitherto unexplored cultural treasures of India. The work of their scholarship has tended to bring about a great change in the attitude of the educated Westerner towards Indian civilisation. Europe no longer looks upon India as the land of barbarians. Being dissatisfied with her own civilisation, especially after the Great War, she has even learned to appreciate some aspects of the Indian culture. Nay, as Dr. James H. Cousins points out in his admirable article on "Oriental Culture and World Renaissance" which has appeared in the *New Orient*, "Europe is to-day turning towards India in her search for a saner and surer attitude to life and humanity than that which has brought her to the brink of ruin. . . . The hour is here when the great gift which India has had in her hands for humanity for millennia should be taken in friendship and put to use."

In this age of world-synthesis every country has to be a student and teacher at the same time. India has much to learn from the West and also much to teach her in return. The West is empirical and therefore analytic in her vision of men and things, while India is intuitive and consequently synthetic in her outlook upon life and its mani-

fold expressions. It is therefore that unlike the West she never raised insurmountable barriers between science and religion, art and philosophy. The difference between the Eastern and Western temperament is clearly manifest in the epoch-making researches of Sir J. C. Bose. This great Hindu scientist has proved the unity of life by demonstrating with the help of his marvellously delicate instruments the identity of response made to external stimuli by minerals, plants, animals and man. A true-born heir of the Vedic sages that he is, he has discovered, as he himself says, the great truth proclaimed by his ancestors on the banks of the Ganges three thousand years ago—"They who see but One in all the changing manifoldness of their universe, unto them belongs eternal truth, unto none else, unto none else." Dr. Cousins very aptly observes on this point—"In speaking that phrase from a hoary scripture of India the scientist became at the same time the religious and the philosopher, thrilling to the apprehension of the vast life of the cosmos, glowing with the vision of the universal homogeneity, in both of which he found the source and ratification of his researches."

World-culture has its three aspects, devotional, creative and reflective. These find their fulfilment in religion, art and philosophy respectively. In the West the inner relation between these apparently different expressions of culture is usually lost sight of, and they are usually looked upon as separate. But in India they are inseparable and fulfil one another. Observes Dr. Cousins—"In India, with its strong impulse to objectivity in art as a synthetic complement to its strong impulse to abstraction in philosophy, the sense of the cosmic Personality, and the devotional response of a people in whom the transcendental, the subjective and the objective are equally balanced, have led to an extraordinary elaboration of what outside India is called sacred art but in India is not objectively distinguished from any other expression of the cosmic life. . . . Religion (the expression of the devotional impulse) and art (the tangible reminder and aid to devotion) are rooted in the Vedanta and bear always and everywhere the insignia of their origin. There is no

posture or phase in the religious ceremonial of India that has not an explanation of natural significance ; there is no image or detail of an image that does not rise, when questioned, from the physical to the metaphysical."

India has realised life as a synthetic whole in which religion, art and philosophy are perfectly harmonised. And she invites the whole world to share with her the infinite joy of the realisation of the Unity of Life,—which is the greatest contribution she can make to world-culture.

#### RURAL RECONSTRUCTION

It is well-known that the villages form the heart of the Indian nation. There are 685,665 villages and 2,316 towns in our country. The rural population is 286.5 millions and the population in the urban area is 32.5 millions. Thus about 90 per cent. of the inhabitants live in the villages. And the importance of rural reconstruction is therefore being increasingly recognised.

In an article in the September number of the *Indian Review*, a writer justly observes that only in the light of our past history and traditions can improvement be made in the country. Of course, we are also to adopt such suitable methods as have been utilised by foreign countries for their advancement.

The village must be the unit of local self-government. It was so in the past. The village officials were elected by and responsible to the villagers. They were remunerated by grants of rent-free land or assignments of grain at harvest time. But unfortunately the whole system has been completely changed since the advent of the British. Consequently those who were the servants of the village are now indifferent to its welfare. The writer referred to aptly suggests that pending the abolition of the present administrative machinery of the village, every village should have a village council elected by the people, which would serve as an effective check on the administration under the existing system. Each village council should be divided into various executive committees, each with a particular department of constructive work. Such

committees should devise schemes for the improvement of their respective items of activity like agriculture, education, sanitation and health, and place them before the general council. Agriculture is the mainstay of the Indian people, and first of all, all possible improvements in it should be made in our land as was done by the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society under the leadership of Sir Horace Plunket. The starting of co-operative credit societies, the encouragement of cottage industries, the administration of justice by the village Panchayat, the fostering of the ideal of teetotalism and the removal of untouchability—all these have to be tackled with the help and co-operation of enlightened citizens and villagers. What is required is self-sacrifice on the part of the educated men and women who must have a heart to feel for the untold miseries of the poor Indian masses.

#### CHRISTIANITY AND THE INDIAN MASSES

In a thought-provoking article entitled "In Praise of Heathenism," contributed to the *Open Court*, Lily Strickland Anderson observes—"Much has been spoken and written about the difficulties of Christianizing the so-called heathen. One who has lived for any considerable time in the East, comes to have serious doubts as to the desirability of doing so, even if it were possible."

It has been a startling revelation to many an unbiassed Western observer that the Indian Christian converts who are recruited mostly from the lowest classes are not necessarily benefited morally and spiritually by their change of creed. Nay, being drawn away from their natural environment and the healthy influences of their simple faith, the humble peasant and the labourer often degenerate in their moral and religious life. To make matters worse, they also learn some of the vices of their Western co-religionists. Religious zealots who are jubilant over what they call "winning souls to Christ" will be shocked to read of the experiences and impressions of the writer about the Indian Christian servants. Says the writer—"We have learnt that it is far better to eschew the Christianised native and stick to the heathen in our domestic

establishments. Before we had been enlightened by personal experience we were the victims of wholesale robberies, deceits and lies. Our properties were stolen; our pantry and 'cellarette' depleted of food and liquids by Christian servants; and on the whole, we found them a whining, contemptible and avaricious lot. . . . . Now we are happily surrounded by a small army of faithful and efficient servants: Sikhs, Mohammedans, and Hindus. Heathens all ! ”

Indeed “institutionalised” Christianity is not the crying need in India as the evangelist would have his supporters believe. But still the process of conversion appears to make some progress among the lowest classes. The reason is that these communities suffer from great poverty and social iniquity. And some of them rush to embrace Christianity not for any spiritual gain but for the betterment of their economic and social condition. The Christian missionary often renders them valuable service, social, economic and also educational. But this he does with the main object of proselytising. In his craze for evangelisation he exploits the disabilities of the people, and somehow or other tries to bring them into the “fold of Christ”. This form of conversion to Christianity does not mean the triumph of the Gospel. Nay, it has its tragic aspect also.

However great may be the value of his social service, the missionary very often does incalculable harm to the convert in the matter of religion. His teachings tend to destroy the simple faith of the poor “heathen”. The writer thus describes the state of the poor peasant convert—“Where once he called on Vishnu or Shiva, he now turns a bewildered face up to the empty skies, shorn of the garments of his dreams. The more Puritanical his teacher, the more he is divested of beauty. All things that were natural and free to him, are wrong; all that he thought good, is bad; . . . . . his imaginative and satisfying theology is ridiculed; he is a sinner, a savage, and a creature of scornful pity. He receives a vague, elusive, cold and unfamiliar maze of words in exchange for all the intimate and beloved manifestation of his old be-

lief. The new religion does not make him happy, because it is an imperfect system, imperfectly practised and taught."

Thus instead of intensifying the simple faith of the poor convert, the missionary undermines his very religious nature. And for this his narrow outlook upon religious life is solely responsible. As the writer very truly says—"The average revivalist is seldom intelligent enough to have studied, for purposes of comparison if nothing more, some, or all of the twenty Bibles of the world that exist beside his own. He has not considered the value of Mohammed, Buddha, Zoroaster, or even Confucius and Lao Tze, as great teachers inspired to benefit humanity. He, as a Christian, belongs to the army of the world's greatest snobs."

The writer very sympathetically describes the psychology of the Indian masses and their popular religion, and this she does from her personal knowledge of men and things. She rightly observes that the missionary's pratings about hell-fire and the everlasting torments of the damned do not appeal to the Indian mind. Such a conception is "infinitely more cruel and barbarous" than anything the Indian can think of. Again, the missionary always speaks of Christ as his intermediary. But the Indian wants to intercede directly with his God. "'God is in his house,'" observes the writer, "in the concrete form of many household deities. The system of Polytheism offers the consolation of a separate God for every need; and yet, to the cultured Hindu, all these Gods are but the symbolical representations of the One, Brahma, the Creator."

#### JOURNALISM IN INDIA

With the increasing influence of Western culture and civilisation and the consequent adoption of Western methods of civic education, journalism has become an important means of the dissemination of ideas in India as also in other countries of the East. In ancient times, before the art of writing was discovered, the masses were educated in ways which were entirely different from those of the present days. Ancient Rome propagated her political and social ideas through the forum. Mediæval Europe preached Christianity from the pulpit. And in the India of pre-Buddhistic times, the precious

treasures of her religion and philosophy were thrown open to the people by means of religious *Sammelans* (assemblies), *Kathakathas* (discourses combined with religious music) and so on. But this method of popular education was relegated to a subsidiary place when the art of writing was discovered and it has been almost completely superseded by printed literature in modern days with the adoption of scientific and improved means of printing. The most brilliant oration on the vital problems of life or the burning topics of the day has to depend entirely on the newspaper for becoming known to the world to-day, nay it stands in danger of being consigned to oblivion even by the province or state in which it is delivered, unless it is published for the benefit of numerous readers in a daily or a periodical.

Journalism has thus come to stay in India as a prominent factor in civic enlightenment. But the art being new in our land, it requires considerable improvement and effective organisation. In the words of the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri who spoke on the subject in Bangalore on the 10th November,—“The journalist in India at all events has to clear the jungle, to lay down the main road.” It is indeed a sad thing to see that all over the country, many papers are closing down and tottering, and many others are leading precarious tenures. This involves a heavy financial loss and also a great loss of prestige. This is partly due to the lack of wealth and of popular culture in India. Journalism being a reflex of the level of literacy and culture of the people, it is naturally bound to partake of the slowness or rapidity with which society itself grows.

Subject to several limitations as journalism is in India, its condition can be greatly improved if the journalist can be imbued with a profound sense of his exalted duty. He must be a man who has received the best in culture and education, possesses a high sense of idealism and performs his work in a spirit of service to the people. His function is that of a teacher of society, who has to draw lessons from the opinions or news that reach him. He has in many ways to keep his personality in the background but has to be

ever alert to hit the sense of propriety of his readers, educate their opinion, clarify their thoughts and refine their tastes. Just as a high level of culture and education can be maintained only by proper and well-trained teachers who are themselves embodiments of what they teach, so also success and efficiency in journalism can result only through the efforts of such journalists, as are perfectly sincere, possessed of the courage of conviction and endowed with a burning love for the country and its people.

But it is regrettable indeed that journalism does not draw to it such men as can do full justice to their work and glorify their profession. Many young men who are incapable of setting a tone to the thought of society and are consequently unfit to render it any valuable service often take to the profession for want of a lucrative employment. They are not wholly to blame, for is not the same lack of efficiency noticeable also in the teaching, the legal, and other professions? Do the best men who will be shining examples to those with whom they come into contact embrace these professions? The main cause of the low level of efficiency of the staff is lack of organisation.

Unless and until the journalistic profession is well organised as in the West, it cannot hope to have hands who can enhance its prestige and maintain an elevated standard of integrity. Many of the professions like medicine, engineering and the like require a certain minimum level of education and proficiency on the part of those who desire to take to it. But setting up a similar standard alone will not suffice. Journalism should be made lucrative and attractive in various ways so as to encourage deserving men and stimulate their efforts. The editor is, no doubt, to be a person of high culture, education and training but when a paper is to be useful to hundreds and thousands of readers in and outside a province or country, and consequently requires a large staff to run it, its quality can be good only if its staff is worthy.

The organisation requisite for the success of journalism has to be attempted, therefore, in a country like ours where



the art is comparatively new. The journalist is the friend and guide of one and all—of the student and the citizen, of the young and the old of diverse tastes and callings in life. Does not therefore our civic education greatly depend on the journalism of the country? Government interference and control is incompatible with the very spirit of journalism. In the words of Mr. Sastry, “news tutored by Government, views censored by Government as it were, instructions to the public conveyed in the manner that the Government prescribes—oh, what can be worse? It is the utter negation of what we call the freedom of the press”. And whom then can we expect to take initiative in the matter of organising journalism, except the veterans in the profession, who have the needed training, experience and wisdom.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### SRIMAT SWAMI SHIVANANDA

Srimat Swami Shivananda, President of the Ramakrishna Mission, who was staying at Ootacamund since the 4th June left for Bangalore on the 20th October last. The Swami was staying at the Ramakrishna Ashrama there for about a month. He came to Madras on the 18th November. He is expected to stay at the Ramakrishna Math at Mylapore till about the middle of December next.

### SRIMAT SWAMI NIRMALANANDA

Srimat Swami Nirmalananda, President of the Ramakrishna Ashrama at Bangalore, came to Madras on the 18th November in the company of Srimat Swami Shivananda. The Swami stayed for four days at the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore. He gave a class talk to the students of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Mylapore, on the 20th November. He also held a very eloquent conversazione at the Ramakrishna Math on the 21st, and returned to Bangalore on the same day.

### SWAMI SHARVANANDA IN MYSORE

Swami Sharvananda went to Mysore early in last August and was staying there for six weeks. His presence there was well made use of by the public of the place.

On the 13th August, the Swami delivered the inaugural address of H. H. the Maharaja's College Philosophical Association, the subject of the address being 'A Critical Study of Mayavada'.

Prof. A. R. Wadia of the Mysore University presided on the occasion. The meeting was well attended by the students and staff of the College. The Swami delivered another lecture under the auspices of the Mysore Hostel Union on the Message of Swami Vivekananda to Modern India and a very large number of students attended the meeting. He was next invited to speak in Her Highness the Maharani's College at Mysore on the Ideals of the Sanatana Dharma. At the request of the Mysore University Union, he addressed the students on Religion as a Cultural Force. The meeting was presided over by Prof. Macintosh, the officiating Principal, who remarked that he was struck with the highly optimistic outlook characterising the Swami's lecture as well as his definition of religion, which was non-sectarian and all-inclusive. The Literary Union of Mysore also arranged for two lectures in the Rangacharlu Memorial Hall, with Mr. M. Venkatakrishnayyah, M. L. C., as President of the meeting. The Swami spoke eloquently on Aggressive Hinduism and Harmony of Religions.

The University of Mysore also invited the Swami to deliver a series of lectures on the Philosophy of the Upanishads. The lectures which were given on five headings, *viz.*, the First Principle, Cosmology, Epistemology and psychology, Eschatology and the Law of Karma, and Ethics, were all well attended throughout by a representative gathering of the students and the public. It is hoped that in course of time, these lectures will be printed in book form.

The Swami also addressed the Vivekananda Rover-scouts on the Ideals of Brahmacharyam on the occasion of the opening of a wrestling Akhara at the Ramakrishna Ashram in Mysore. He gave a talk as well to the Rover-scouts of the Wesleyan Mission Collegiate High School on the Development of Character.

Besides these lectures, the Swami also held conversaziones which were attended by many interested in the Vedanta Philosophy.

A group of students were regularly attending a class which the Swami used to hold in the Ramakrishna Ashram and in which he expounded Sri Sankaracharya's Adhyasa Bhashya on the Vedanta Sutras.

Accompanied by a group of his students, the Swami visited some of the historical places of interest—Belur, Halebid and Sravanbelgola. He left for Bombay on the 19th September.

#### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION BRANCH, Dacca

This branch of the Ramakrishna Mission was started in 1899. Its report for 1924 is a record of admirable service rendered in three-fold ways—missionary, educational and charitable. It conducts regular religious services in several parts of the town on different days of the week, and also holds classes and meetings for the propagation of the truths of the Sanatana Dharma. This Mission branch is also run-

ning a free school in which the instructions are imparted up to the fourth standard of the secondary English education. The number of boys on the roll for the year under review was 89. A library and free reading room which is also maintained affords the public facilities for study. The in-door hospital contains four beds. The total number of cases treated there was 20, while that in the out-door dispensary including repeated ones was 3,379, the actual number of out-door patients being 1,149. The Mission also renders valuable service in other forms such as cremation of corpses of destitutes and relief work during occasional Mela and cholera epidemics. The total receipts during the year under review amounted to Rs. 3,083-11-2 and the total expenditure to Rs. 2,037-11-0, the balance on hand being Rs. 1,045-15-4. In order to raise a permanent fund for continuing its noble work without being crippled by financial difficulties in the future, the Mission branch appeals for help to the philanthropic public. Contributions may be kindly sent to the Honorary Secretary.

#### VOICE OF TRUTH

This new monthly in English, edited and published by Swami Videhananda and Brahmachari Videha of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Kuala Lumpur, F. M. S., forms a welcome addition to the periodicals of the Ramakrishna Mission. It is intended, as its foreword says, to "meet the necessity of a religious and philosophical organ for the propagation of moral and spiritual ideas and ideals" in the Federated Malay States. Its object is the dissemination of the eternal truths of religion for the good of all irrespective of caste, creed or colour. We wish the journal all success. The annual subscription is \$ 5 and the price of a single copy is 50 cents.

#### THE LATE SWAMI VEDANANDA

It is with deep sorrow that we record the passing away of Swami Vedananda, the head of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram at Brindaban. For about a year past, he had several attacks of serious fever and pneumonia. An attack of diphtheria, however, was the immediate cause of his passing away. The Swami was an ardent patriot who joined the Ramakrishna Order about fifteen years ago and was the brother of S. Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, the famous Bengali novelist. May his soul rest in peace !

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# THE VEDANTA KESARI

" Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

" Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want  
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold  
The Upanishads and believe that ' I am the Atman.' "

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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## P R A Y E R

एकस्त्वमसि लोकस्य स्रष्टा संहारकस्तथा ।  
अध्यक्षश्चानुमन्ता च गुणमायासमावृतः ॥  
संसारसागरं घोरमनन्तक्लेशमाजनम् ।  
त्वामेव शरणं प्राप्य निस्तरन्ति मनीषिणः ॥  
न ते रूपं न चाकारो नायुधानि न चास्पदम् ।  
तथाऽपि पुरुषाकारो भक्तानां त्वं प्रकाशसे ॥

Lord ! Thou art the sole Creator, Destroyer and the Presiding Lord of the universe. Thou dost permit Thy creatures to act according to their will, Thyself being only a Witness. Thou art veiled by the Gunas and Maya, and art therefore beyond the comprehension of ordinary mortals.

The wise men, finding in Thee the surest Refuge, cross the terrible ocean of birth and death,—the cause of endless pain and misery.

Thou hast no colour, no form, no weapons, no particular abode ; yet Thou revealest Thyself unto Thy devotees in human forms.

—THE MAHABHARATA

## SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

*(At the Belur Math)*

**M**OST people waste the whole of their life in trivial matters. And when old age overtakes them, many of those who are in service retire with pensions and spend their last days at some place of pilgrimage. They think that in this way they can attain Bhakti (devotion) and Mukti (liberation). They also fondly hope that the Tirthas (places of pilgrimage) will enable them to expiate all the sins they have committed. Is it not sheer madness to think thus?—What else can it be? He who firmly believes in the purifying power of the Tirthas will, of course, receive some spiritual impetus therefrom. Truly the Tirthas are always pure and holy, and those who have good Samskaras (tendencies) in them are indeed somewhat benefited by them spiritually. That is all. Nothing more can be expected out of it. Man indeed is to strive hard for his salvation. Benares, however, has to be considered as an exception. Many people, therefore, are anxious to spend there the last days of their lives. They entertain the firm hope that they will attain liberation if they pass away in that sacred city. True it is that a man is freed from the bonds of Samsara (birth and death) if he breathes his last at Benares. Viswanath\* is the Lord of the Universe and queer and inscrutable are His ways.

Is it desirable to live a whole life in misery and suffering and then attain Mukti (liberation)? Is it not, on the other hand, wiser to enjoy the present life in the ecstasy of devotion and spiritual practice and then once for all enter the portals of infinite bliss? As Thakur (Sri Ramakrishna) used to say—"You can enter

\*Lit. Lord of the Universe, a name for Shiva who, as the devotee believes, confers the highest knowledge and salvation to those who die in the holy city of Benares.

a house through its front gate as well as through its back door." But which of these is better? When it is possible to gain entrance through the front gate, why should we enter through the back door, inhaling the noxious smell of faecal matter? Decide now which of these two you should choose,—momentary happiness or infinite bliss,—the pleasures of this life, or the everlasting peace of the life beyond?

One great thing to be considered is Kripa (Divine grace). The breeze of His grace is always blowing. Only unfurl your sails and you will have it. How can you get the breeze if you keep your sails rolled up? Hoist them now and do not delay any more. Give up your desires for worldly enjoyments, your hankering for name and fame, and fully resign yourself to the Lord. It is quite impossible to enjoy worldly pleasures and at the same time realise God. You cannot serve both God and mammon at the same time. If you want to realise God, you must renounce worldly pleasures. If, on the other hand, you desire to enjoy temporal pleasures, you will have to give up God. Do not keep your feet in two boats, as they say. If you do it, you will only make yourself miserable. You must have a clear conception of your life's ideal. Decide now what life you want to lead. Should it be this fleeting life of transient pleasures or the everlasting life of eternal bliss?

You are young boys,—innocent and guileless. Worldliness has not left its impress on your mind yet. If you will be up and doing from now, you can escape from the clutches of the trials and tribulations of worldly life. Fix your principles even now. If it is not done now, it will never be done. Bare skipping on the surface will be of no avail. Hold on to your ideal fast and never loosen your grip. To the man who has accepted God as the be-all and end-all of life, has forsaken all desires and cravings for sensual enjoyments—for him God is very near. Such a man binds God with the ties of his love as Yasoda and the Gopis did Gopal.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say : “ He who has denied himself for the sake of God has a strong and undisputed claim on Him. ” As one can endearingly demand anything of one’s parents or one’s near relations so a devotee has a right to ask God—“Lord, appear before me. Won’t you appear before me ? Appear you must. ” When a devotee is so earnest, God cannot remain unmoved. He hastens to him and takes him on His lap. Oh, how inexpressible that joy ! How boundless that bliss ! He alone knows it who has had that supreme experience. Compared to it, the worldly pleasures—so dear to most people—become insipid and worthless.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say—“ He who has totally given up carnal enjoyments for the sake of God has already covered three-fourths of his journey. ” Is it easy to renounce all enjoyments ? Only if a man has enough of God’s grace—only if he has done severe ‘Tapas’ (spiritual discipline) in his past life, can he acquire the wonderful capacity required for renunciation. Purify your mind in such a way that vile thoughts may not be able to arise in it at all.

You are all Brahmacharins (celibates). You will not marry,—you have pledged your life for God, sacrificing its pleasures, enjoyments and all for His sake. But bear in mind that it is very hard to lead a pure and unsullied life. It is not so easy as you young boys take it to be. Do you know what it is like ? It is like your walking by balancing yourself on the edge of a drawn sword. Every moment there is the chance of a fall,—of your being sliced to pieces. Perfect continence is the only condition of success in this life. And it is difficult, nay impossible, to practise absolute purity without love and faith in God. You have to live in a world full of passions and enjoyments,—everyday you have to see before you more than ninety-nine per cent of people running mad after sensual pleasures. And so there is every risk of your mind being contaminated with various evil

thoughts. Somehow or other if your mind becomes tainted by them, then there is no hope for you. Those who want to lead a life of Brahmacharyam (continence) must always engage their minds in the thinking of good thoughts, study of good books, discussion of good subjects, worship of God, service to holy men, company of pious people and practice of meditation and other spiritual disciplines. This is the only way of moulding one's character.

First of all, be fully firm in your devotion to the practice of Brahmacharyam (continence). And everything else will come by itself. Perfection in continence cannot be attained without Sadhana (spiritual practices), and without perfect continence, realisation of God is impossible. Unless God is realised, real bliss cannot be had, and without real happiness, human life would be spent in vain. You are all young boys—with pure mind and noble intuitions. Do, do, my dear ones, a little Sadhana, and you will see Sraddha (faith) and Bhakti (devotion) will be roused up within you. You will become heirs of immortal bliss,—you will be blessed with the vision of your Ishtam (Chosen Ideal),—with the vision of God. You will then attain to the ultimate goal of human life.

## EDITORIAL NOTES

### THE VILLAGE—ITS PLACE IN NATIONAL LIFE

**I**T is a happy sign of the time that all problems of national life in India are being recognised at the present day as inextricably bound up with the problem of rural reconstruction. India being essentially a rural country, all improvements—social or political, industrial or commercial, educational or cultural—have their basis in the village. This is because her villages form the heart of the nation. Out of her total population of 320 millions, more than 286 millions live in the villages which number not less than 685,000. The happiness



and prosperity, the wealth and power of India therefore depend upon those of her villages. Those who work for the good of the country therefore must bring about a resuscitation of its village life. In the words of Mr. K. T. Paul, a prominent rural worker of considerable experience, we must "remind ourselves that 90 per cent. of our people live in villages of less than 5,000 in population, that it is their health that determines the vitality of the nation, their labour which decides what India shall buy or sell, their habits which denote our national character, their education which can enable India to assimilate the lessons of well-being offered by the experience of the world."

#### EXPLOITATION OF VILLAGES BY TOWNS

The cry of "Back to the Land" which is heard everywhere in India to-day is a vehement protest against the growing evils resulting from the centralisation of life in cities and towns. Referring to the same problem in the West, A. E., the great patriot and practical idealist of Ireland, has said—"The absorption of life in great cities is really the danger which most threatens the modern State with a decadence of its humanity. In the United States, even in Canada, hardly has the pioneer made a home in the wilderness when his sons and his daughters are allured by the distant gleam of cities beyond the plains. In England the countryside has ceased to be the mother of men—at least a fruitful mother." This observation is entirely true of India as well. Western civilisation and system of administration with which our country came into contact about a century and a half ago has been exercising a deep influence on the mode of life and the habits of the people. It has brought in its train an unrestricted growth of industrialism which has given rise to big cities and towns that absorb the best brains and riches of the land. Our local boards deal with towns and effect improvements for the comforts and conveniences of life in urban areas alone. The representatives of the people who sit on these boards as well as in higher councils are men from towns whose interests are almost entirely in urban life. And the administration is built up on the model of England where under the influence of the great industrial revolution the large majority of the people live in cities and towns and not in villages. The fact that a small body of Englishmen have had to build up our administration has also been one of the reasons of centralisation which

benefits the town more than the village,—nay, raises the one on the ruins of the other. This merciless exploitation of the villages has proved prejudicial to the welfare of all the classes of people in the country, nay it even threatens with ruin the very foundations of its economic life. Allured by the comforts and enjoyments of the city and captivated by its charms and its splendours, the members of the aristocracy are leaving their ancestral homes and losing their living interest in the village. And compelled by poverty and actuated by the hope of earning their subsistence in towns, the middle class people also are forsaking their village homes. This exploitation by the town drives the poor peasant to a life of a petty wage-earner in the great centres of industry and commerce. It is thus evolving a homeless and landless proletariat which was unknown in the prosperous India of the past. The city has been draining the village of its resources not only of men but also of its precious products.

#### PICTURE OF A MODERN INDIAN VILLAGE

The modern Indian village presents indeed a very dismal and pathetic spectacle. Most of its inhabitants are suffering from poverty and disease and are sunk in degradation and ignorance. The old spirit of love and co-operation is being replaced by a spirit of arrant selfishness and aggressive individualism. The solidarity created by the ancient caste guilds and the co-ordination of labour for the mutual good and the common welfare of the whole community of which the villagers formed the limbs are fast breaking down. The simplicity and purity, the peace and prosperity, which characterised the village life of the good old days and which formed the themes of many a song and many a poem on the countryside are ebbing away. The schools which used to teach the three R's to the boys and girls and which, on the authority of Sir Thomas Munro, existed in every village are more or less extinct, and almost extinct also are the simple country games, religious festivals and modes of worship. All this havoc has been done by the mad rush of the people from the country to the city. So it was that in the course of a very valuable address on what he called "The Robbery of the Soil," which was published in the *Modern Review*, Mr. Elmhirst remarked— "Of all thieves, the cities are the most ruthless. In the race to satisfy their demands the present individualistic type of society, with its enslavement of the uneducated masses, its law-suits, its lack of culture and of all finer feelings and

ideals, has completely obliterated the old common life in which all from the Brahman at the top to the labourers at the bottom, were servants of the common welfare. Nowadays in the scramble for gold and power, nutritious food, sanitary considerations and civic amenities are sacrificed. The soil is given no chance to do its part, and poverty and disease, famines and fighting in law courts, complete the dismal picture." All these evils can be remedied only by the work of rural reconstruction on a sound and secure basis.

#### REVIVAL OF THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY .

A scheme for the rehabilitation of our villages—for their economic, industrial, educational, social and other improvements—can be formulated only in the light of India's past history and traditions, though the methods employed by foreign countries for bringing about their own speedy advancement should also be adopted. And the first and foremost item in any programme of village reconstruction should be the resuscitation of the village community. In the past the village was the unit of local self-government and so should it be in the future. It formed the strong and solid rock on which the national edifice was firmly built. Dwelling on the profound wisdom of this policy, Sir Charles Metcalfe observed—"The village communities are little republics, having nearly everything they can want within themselves and almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down; revolution succeeds revolution; Hindu, Pathan, Moghal, Mahratta, Sikh, English and all masters in turn, but the village communities remain the same. . . . . This union of the village communities, each one forming a separate little State in itself has, I conceive, contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the peoples of India, through all the revolutions and changes which they have suffered, and is in a high degree conducive to their happiness, and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence." It is one of the most pernicious results of the present form of administration that this ancient system has undergone a complete change. Under the old system, the village officials were elected by and responsible to the villages. They were the true servants of the people and were remunerated by grants of land or assignments of grain during harvest time. But with the break-down of the village community the national degeneration which we notice to-day began to set in. The

educated classes have been sucking the very life-blood of the poor illiterate masses who have been patiently toiling for centuries past without a word of murmur or a voice of protest. It is this great havoc and untold misery wrought by the tragic blunder of the British system of administration that Lord Ronaldshay acknowledges in these words: "It is, I think, a not unreasonable deduction from the knowledge which we now possess of the theory and practice of Government in Ancient India that if, instead of creating municipal and district boards of the Western type, we had begun by re-creating the village organisations which were congenial to the people, local self-government would have made more satisfactory progress than has actually been the case. . . . . This salutary return in the direction of the ancient indigenous system is breathing new life into local self-government."

#### A CALL FOR SELF-LESS WORKERS

Pending the salutary change in the administration, by which the village officials will once more be made responsible to the people whom they serve, we should form centres of rural work in every village with the help and co-operation of sympathetic and philanthropic persons of the land. The necessity for such work is urgent and imperative. The burden of responsibility lies on the shoulders of the educated classes who must themselves go back to the villages, live there and inaugurate the noble work of reviving the village life. They must bear in mind, as Sir P. C. Ray observed in a recent speech at Mysore, that when the average income of an Indian per day is seven pies and that of an Englishman is seven rupees, the game of aping the Westerner in the cigar and dress and motor car is not worth the trial or the cost. They must also remember that the status of an Indian in other countries is not that of Tagore or J. C. Bose but that of the average man of our land, and that it is the masses that form the warp and the woof of the web of Indian national life. Deeply moved by their appalling poverty and down-trodden condition, Swami Vivekananda expressed his feelings in these touching terms—"And oh! how my heart ached to think of what we think of the poor, the low in India. They have no chance, no escape, no way to climb up. The poor, the low, the sinner in India have no friends, no help—they cannot rise, try however, they may. They sink, lower and lower every day, they feel the blow showered upon them by a cruel society, and they do not know whence the blow

comes. They have forgotten that they too are men. And the result is slavery.' Practical measures like those adopted by the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society under the leadership of Sir Horace Plunket in Ireland must be taken without delay to raise the condition of the masses who live in the villages. What is needed is, in the eloquent words of the Swami, "a hundred thousand men and women, fired with the zeal of holiness, fortified with eternal faith in the Lord, and nerved to lion's courage by their sympathy for the poor and the fallen and the down-trodden."

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## ESSENTIALS OF HINDU PHILOSOPHY\*

*By Swami Yatiswarananda*

THE term Hindu has an interesting history of its own. It is derived from the word Sindhu—the Sanskrit name for the river Indus, which the ancient Persians changed into Hindu, and also applied to the people living in the country beyond the mighty river. The word was also used by the Mohammedan invaders of India, from whom it was taken up by the Indo-Aryans themselves. But it has now lost its original meaning. Instead of implying all the Indian people including Hindus, Mohammedans, Christians and other communities, it means at present only the followers of the Vedic religion and philosophy, popularly known as Hinduism.

Whatever may have been the change the word has undergone in its meaning, it has not, however, affected the essentials of Hinduism. The relation between religion and philosophy has always remained unchanged. The two have ever been in perfect harmony with each other in India. But they have never been cordial in their relation in Western lands. Nay, they have been at war with each other, and have not been able to come to terms even in modern times. A great Western philosopher has observed that a learned ignorance is the end of philosophy and the beginning of religion. This remark clearly points to the disharmony that exists between the two. Western philosophy being discursive by nature, it is at variance with religion which is intuitive. But Hindu religion and

\*Notes of a lecture delivered under the auspices of the Philosophical Association of the Presidency College, Madras.

philosophy both aim at the intuitive vision of the Truth, and fulfil each other. As Prof. Max Müller very aptly observes, the two have worked together harmoniously in India alone, where religion derives its freedom from philosophy and philosophy gains its spirituality from religion. Religion is the practical form of philosophy and philosophy the rational aspect of religion. As a matter of fact it is not possible to separate the two. The Hindu philosophers were primarily men of spiritual realisation, and they based their systems on the unshakable foundation of transcendental experience. The ancient seers of India made a sincere search for the ultimate Reality, and were able to come face to face with it. In fact what are known as religion and philosophy came into existence as the fruits of this search which ended in realisation. They are the products of Divine vision and lead to the same goal.

In Hinduism the word for philosophy is Darshana which means a system calculated to bring about the vision of the Truth. And many are such systems which include not only what are ordinarily called philosophy and religion but also science. None of these were at war with one another in Hinduism. The principles of cosmic evolution and the concepts of mechanics, physics, chemistry and other positive sciences find their place in Hindu philosophical thought. As Sir Brajendra Nath Seal puts it, they supply the empirical basis on which the speculative superstructure of Hinduism was raised.

As the Upanishad declares, two kinds of knowledge are to be known—the higher as well as the lower. Higher knowledge implies that by which Brahman—the ultimate Reality—is known. Lower knowledge includes all branches of learning, which, as known to the ancients and enumerated by the Chhandogya Upanishad, consisted of the Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda, Atharva Veda, history, grammar, the rules of the sacrifices for the ancestors, the science of numbers, the science of portents, the science of time, logic, ethics, etymology, pronunciation, ceremonial, prosody, the science of the elements, the science of war, astronomy, the science of snake-charming and fine arts. All these manifold branches of study, if sincerely pursued, develop the intellect of man and prepare him for the understanding of the Highest Truth. In short they find their fulfilment in “the knowledge of Brahman, which is the foundation of all knowledge.”

India is the land of toleration. Even in early days there existed in this holy Motherland of ours a great freedom of

thought which could not even be dreamt of in any other part of the world. And freedom being the first condition of growth, philosophy could thrive here in a very natural manner. Apparently contradictory systems of thought flourished side by side without being hampered by bloody persecutions that soiled the religious history of other lands.

There are various systems of Hindu philosophy. Each of these traces its origin from a great Rishi or seer of Truth. Thus Hindu philosophy is not the fruit of the experience of a single individual, however great he might have been, but is, on the other hand, the product of the spiritual genius of the entire Hindu race.

Of all the different schools of Hindu philosophy the "orthodox" ones are six in number. These are the Vaishe-shika system of Kanada, the Nyaya system of Gotama, the Sankhya system of Kapila, the Yoga system of Patanjali, the Purva Mimamsa of Jaimini and the Vedanta of Vyasa. The Vaisheshika and the Nyaya schools, which are not two systems but two streams of the same system, believe in the existence of the Creator, in an infinite number of souls, and in eternal entities, such as, mind, the five elements of earth, water, light, air and ether and other categories. The allied schools of Sankhya and Yoga, which do not feel the necessity of God the Creator, speak of an infinite number of Purushas (souls) but of one Prakriti—the creatrix out of which evolve the ego, mind, senses, sense-objects and other products. The Purva Mimamsa system, which also has no place for God in it, believe in the existence of souls, and also of the various elements that, impelled by the unseen power of Karma, combine into the gross material world. The Vedanta of Vyasa dwells on the potential divinity of man and believes in God who is immanent in soul and Nature, and is also transcendent at the same time. All our modern sects and creeds are based more or less on the system of Vedanta of which however there are three main schools. However divergent the systems may be, they all originate from the same "Manasa lake" of philosophical thought. They all speak of the same Truth from different points of view, and as such they possess an underlying unity which may not be manifest to the superficial observer.

The various schools of ancient Indian thought including the six systems may be divided into Astika and Nastika. These terms which in modern times imply belief and disbelief in God respectively, had quite a different meaning in

olden times. Those who believed in the existence of the soul, and its continuation after the death of the body were called Astikas, while those who possessed no such belief were called Nastikas. The Sankhyas who declared that there was no proof of the existence of God, were Astikas because they posited the existence of the "eternal, pure, free and enlightened" Purusha or soul. The Charvakas or the gross materialists of ancient times, who besides denouncing God, also looked upon the conception of the soul as a fabrication of the human brain were Nastikas or Nihilists in every sense of the term. To these reckless sensualists of ancient India life was the product of the combination of the elements, and death the end of all things. They declared—"How can the body when it is once burned into ashes come to life again? So long as you live, live in pleasure, even at the risk of running into debt." Thus crude enjoyment of the senses was the only purpose of life according to this extreme school of materialism which, however, could not thrive on the spiritual soil of India, and died a natural death as a system of thought.

Hindu philosophy is universal in its outlook. All the six systems of thought mentioned above speak more of principles than personalities, more of universal truths than particular forms. They possess certain common philosophical ideas. And the most important of these is that of the Atman, although different philosophers have different conceptions of the term. In fact belief in the existence of the soul is an essential faith of the Indian people. Buddhism became positively nihilistic in later days and its negation of the Atman was one of the main causes of its being supplanted by the mother-faith in India. In his refutation of the different schools of Buddhist philosophy, Sankaracharya made the existence of the Atman the most important point of contention. And not only he but all other orthodox philosophers made the Buddhists' disbelief in the Self the sure target of their attack. All this goes to show that the conception of the Atman forms the most important pillar supporting the mighty edifice of Hindu philosophy.

What is the nature of this Atman? Declares the Bhagavad-Gita—

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचिन्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।

अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥



"The Atman is never born, nor does it die. It is not that not having been It again comes into being. It is unborn, eternal, changeless, ever-Itself. It is not killed when the body is killed." It is subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest. It is self-existent and is not a created entity coming into being in time and perishing in time. Each soul is potentially divine, and as such it cannot be condemned to eternal perdition. This Atman dwells equally in men, animals and all other beings In the words of the Upanishadic seer—

एष सर्वेषु भूतेषु गूढोत्मा न प्रकाशते ।

दृश्यते त्वाम्प्रिया बुद्ध्या सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः ॥

"This Atman hidden in all beings, reveals Itself not to all. It is seen only by the subtle-seers through their pointed and subtle intellect."

Associated with the conception of the Atman are those of Karma and re-incarnation. As Swami Vivekananda says,

"Who sows must reap, they say, "and cause must bring  
"The sure effect; good, good; bad, bad; and none  
Escape the law. But whoso wears a form  
Must wear the chain."

The law of Karma or causation is one of the essentials of Hindu philosophy. It has nothing absolutely to do with fatalism and inactivity. On the other hand, if properly understood, it serves as the greatest incentive to work. For according to it, man is not left at the mercy of a tyrant God who exercises his fiat in any way he pleases, but is made fully responsible for his own action. Our present condition is the result of our past actions, and our future will be moulded by our present efforts. The law of Karma asks us to reconcile ourselves to our lot, instead of worrying over things that are beyond our control. At the same time it tells us to put forth fresh good Karma and thereby improve our condition to the best of our capacity. The law of Karma is thus the foundation of morality.

The belief in re-incarnation is inseparably connected with the law of Karma. It too is shared by all schools of Hindu philosophy. Even the Buddhist philosopher who does not believe in God and soul as ordinarily understood, makes it along with the law of Karma one of the main supports of his philosophy. But the Hindu conception of re-incarnation implies not only the existence of the soul, but also its embodied

state before the birth of the present body and also after its death. As Sri Krishna declares in the Gita—

वासंसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय नवानि गृह्णाति नरोपराणि ।  
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णान्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥

“ Even as a man casts off worn out clothes, and puts on others which are new, so the embodied being casts off worn-out bodies and enters into others which are new. ”

In spite of the denunciation by Christianity, the theory of re-incarnation is gaining ground in the West. It is appealing to many poets and thinkers who are tending to popularise the idea. The American poet Walt Whitman has sung—

“As to you, Life, I reckon you are the leavings of  
many deaths,  
No doubt I have died myself ten-thousand  
times before. ”

A single life is not enough for man's evolution. That is why the philosopher Lessing asks—“ Why should I not come back as often as I am capable of acquiring fresh knowledge, fresh experience ? Do I bring away so much from once that there is nothing to repay the trouble of coming back ? ”

The soul passes through cycles of birth and death, gathering fresh experience. And the tendencies with which it is born are the effects of causes which are “ more ancient than this corporeal birth ”. They can never be accounted for by the Semitic theory of one birth, nor by that of the hereditary transmission upheld by the material evolutionist. Every embodied being has twofold ancestry, physical and mental. His physical body he gets from others. But as a thinking soul, he is his own ancestor. What he is now is a continuation of the past, and what he will be will be the continuation of the present.

Is man after all only a helpless being eternally bound by the law of Karma and subject to birth and death ? Is he to turn round and round in the mighty wheel of Karma without ceasing ? In the words of the Upanishad—

इह चेदशकद्वौष्ठं प्राक्शरीरस्य विस्मृतः ।

ततः सर्गेषु लोकेषु शरीरत्वाय कल्पते ॥

“ Here, before the fall of the body, if one is not able to realise Brahman, then one has to take body again in the

world of creation." But when with the dawn of knowledge the soul ceases to identify itself with the body and the mind, and realises its true nature, the world-dream passes away from its vision, and along with it all Karma and re-birth. It is therefore that the Upanishadic seer has declared—

भिद्यते हृदयप्रन्थिच्छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः ।

क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन्दृष्टे परावरे ॥

"The fetter of the heart is broken, all doubts are solved and all works and their effects perish when the Self which is both cause and effect has been beheld."

All the systems of Hindu philosophy place before the aspirants the ultimate goal of life. And they also point out to them the means to its realisation. The Vaisheshika and Nyaya systems speak of Nishreyasa (*summum bonum*) and Apavarga (deliverance). The Sankhya and Yoga schools declare Kaivalya—aloneness or freedom from all forms of misery, to be the highest object of existence. The Purva Mimamsa speaks of the bliss of Swarga or heaven, which is unaffected by misery and is characterised by desirelessness. The Vedanta again declares Moksha or salvation as the highest purpose of life. But whatever may be the term used for salvation, it means at least the soul's attaining to its true, pure state as to the nature of which, however, philosophers differ.

All the schools of modern Hindu thought believe in the existence of God. But this was not so in ancient days. As we find in the aphorisms, the Sankhya philosopher, with his theory of evolution, is not able to find any place for God in his system. He declares—"God is either free or bound. If He is free He cannot have any desire to create. If He is bound, He has not the power to create. Either way He is inefficient for creation." The Yogis too did not believe in a creator. As in the Sankhya philosophy, so in the Yoga system, Purusha or souls, and Prakriti or creatrix are all-sufficient for explaining the theories of cosmology. But the Yogis believe in God as the Teacher of mankind. They hold that "Iswara is a special Purusha untouched by misery, actions, their results and desires. In Him dwells infinite knowledge. He is the teacher of even the ancient teachers, being not limited by time." The Vaisheshikas and Naiyayikas—the atomists and logicians of ancient India—hold that

God is the efficient cause controlling the material causes of the universe. And He directs things according to Karma, both individual and collective. He is the governor of the world. "Iswara is the efficient cause. Every act of man produces results under His superintendence." The followers of the Purva-Mimamsa school recognised no necessity for God in their system. According to them Karma or sacrifice was enough to produce as its result a subtle force that brought about the reward or punishment or both for the acts of men. To the Vedantin, however, God or Iswara or Brahman, is inseparable from the soul. To the dualistic Vedantin who believes in an infinite number of souls, God is the ruler of the universe as also of souls who are eternally dependent on Him as a servant on his master. The Vishishtadvaitin thinks that God is both the material and efficient cause of the universe. According to him, God, soul and Nature make one unit, soul and Nature forming, as it were, the subtler and gross bodies of God. There is an indissoluble connection between God and souls as between the sun and its rays, as between the whole and its parts. The Advaitin acknowledges the existence of God, soul and Nature, but allows them only a phenomenal reality. From the standpoint of the highest truth the three are One which through Maya appears to be many. As the Upanishad proclaims,

सदेव सोम्येदमग्र आसीदेकमेवाद्वितीयम् ।

स य एवोऽणिमा एतदात्म्यमिदं सर्वं तत्सत्यं स आत्मा तत्त्वमसि श्वेतकेतो ॥

"In the beginning, my dear, there was that which is one only without a second. That which is that subtle essence, in it all that exists has its self. It is the Truth. It is the Self, and thou, O Svetaketu, art that."

In the words of Swami Vivekananda, "The Self is the essence of this universe, the essence of all souls ; He is the essence of your own life, nay, 'Thou art That'. You are one with this universe."

All these systems of Hindu philosophic thought can be arranged in a hierarchical order. The Vaisheshika, Nyaya and Karma Mimamsa schools represent the common-sense view to which there is the plurality of soul and matter. The evolutionary schools of Sankhya and Yoga believe in an infinite number of souls but in one primal matter only. According to the Vedantin again there is a cosmic intelligent principle directing the evolution of souls and Nature. The dualist holds

that God, soul and Nature are separate. To the qualified monist the three form one organism, God or Brahman interpenetrating the other two. According to the monist the three appear to be different only in the domain of Maya. But they are essentially one and the same. With the dawn of knowledge all multiplicity loses itself in the Unity which is beyond time, space and causation. This doctrine of the One is the boldest and truest synthesis in the whole history of human thought. It means not a lifeless abstraction, but a practical system which fulfils life. To conclude in the memorable words of Prof. Max Muller, "After lifting the Self above body and soul, after uniting heaven and earth, God and man, Brahman and Atman, these Vedanta philosophers have destroyed nothing in the life of the phenomenal beings who have to act and to fulfil their duties in this phenomenal world. On the contrary, they have shown that there can be nothing phenomenal without something that is real, and that goodness and virtue, faith and works, are necessary as a preparation, nay as a *sine qua non*, for the attainment of the highest knowledge which brings the soul back to its source and to its home, and restores it to its true nature, to its true Selfhood in Brahman."

## THE SECRET OF RIGHT ACTIVITY

*By T. S. Avinashilingam, B. A., B. L.*

**M**AN is born with hope and cheer but dies disappointed and broken-hearted. When he is a boy, he is optimistic and confident of successfully doing everything he attempts. He has a thousand and one plans, and he hopes to carry out everyone of them. Feeling strength in himself, he often proclaims—"What man has done, man can do." But as he grows, his hopes are shattered, his strength fails him, and he finds myriad forces opposing him. Thus it is that most old persons conclude that man's lot in life is nothing but misery and disappointment. What is the cause of this misery? It is not difficult to find. Man pants for the highest but the very means that he adopts to attain it leads him just in

the opposite direction. He wants eternal life, but he wants it through his body which is subject to death. He wants eternal bliss, but he wants to enjoy it through his senses which are ephemeral. He wants perfect knowledge, but he strives to attain it through the mind and the intellect which are bound by limitations. Thus we see that man's ideal, conscious or unconscious, is Sat-Chit-Ananda—Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, but the means he adopts are such that he is doomed to failure.

The real way to attain the end of human life is described in the scriptures. They declare that there are four distinct paths which suit varying temperaments of men and take them to the *summum bonum* of life. These paths are Karma (selfless work), Bhakti (devotion), Jnana (knowledge), and Yoga (psychic control). In practising Karma, a person is to do work but without selfishness and personal motives, without hope and ambition. By its means he gradually loses his ego and merges himself into the Universal. Bhakti is devotion to a Personal God, and by the cultivation of intense divine love, the devotee tries to become one with his Ishtam (Chosen Ideal). With the help of Jnana, a man discriminates about the unreality of the world and arrives by such discrimination at the grand truth of the saying—"Tattwamasi," "That thou art". And Yoga is a means of reaching the Ideal by psychic control. Considering all these, we find that the path of Jnana requires an indomitable will which is not to be met with in the ordinary man. The path of Yoga is hard and dangerous without a proper Guru and is scarcely pursued in these days. So the only paths that are open to one and all in this age are Karma and Bhakti. Of these two, Karma when properly practised will serve not only as a method of individual Sadhana (spiritual discipline) but also as a means by which we can elevate our country and add to the happiness of our countrymen.

Activity is the very nature of life, whatever may be the sphere in which it is manifested,—physical, mental

or spiritual. Karma Yoga or the path of action teaches man to do his work in the right manner. It does not want that he should set apart a portion of his time in learning how to become a Karma Yogi. But it teaches him the attitude he should cultivate in doing all his actions. It does not mean doing particular actions but the particular mode of doing all work in life.

What is the attitude that Karma Yoga teaches us to cultivate? The main message and teaching of Karma Yoga is non-attachment. It advises us that in doing our work, we must be perfectly unattached though we must at the same time put forth all our energy in the work. Attachment is the very source of our pleasures now. We are attached to our relatives and friends, to our wealth and other possessions. This attachment leads us to the intensification and multiplication of our desires. And desire is always subject to the law of success and failure in its gratification. When we attain what we want, we are happy; but when we don't attain it, we feel miserable. That is why the Gita says—"To work you have the right but not to the fruits thereof." We must work, but be unattached. We must be able to throw ourselves heart and soul into our work, and yet at the same time be indifferent to its results. Our miseries are due not to what we love, but to what we expect. People love their wives, husbands, children and friends. So far it is all right. But their love is tainted with selfishness and attachment. They want something in return and they are disappointed in most cases and become miserable. The sages therefore exhort—"Do work but without any attachment or expectation."

An important lesson that we have to learn in Karma Yoga is that all that we do should aim at our self-purification. Our Karma or work, therefore, should help us first and foremost in attaining the Truth. We should avoid making fuss about attempting to do good to the world. There is nothing in the world, of which it can

be said that it is absolutely good or absolutely bad. All the work that we do is a mixture of good and evil; every one of our actions has always a good side as well as a bad side. Looked at from a particular point of view, an action may seem very beneficial; but viewed from a different standpoint, it may seem very harmful. In the words of one of the greatest thinkers of our country—"Good and evil are the obverse and reverse of the same coin". So Karma Yoga says—"Never think that you are doing good to the world. It is all for your own sake, for your own training. Never delude yourself into the belief that you can improve the world. The world is but a dog's tail. Straighten it; it will be straight only so long as you hold it; but leave your hold, it will be curly again. Great spiritual giants such as Krishna and Buddha have come and gone, but to-day the world is as it was before. And so all the ideas of doing good to the world are nothing but vain pride and false conceit." When we are conscious of the fact that our work is intended for removing the veil of ignorance and selfishness from ourselves, whether it brings about good to the world or not, it will help us in obliterating our egoism. Knowing this, we must be perfectly humble and unassuming. It is indeed a great privilege to have the opportunity to serve, for it chastens and improves our character. But service must be done in a spirit of meekness and non-attachment.

When Karma Yoga is thus practised in the right manner, it will make a man more and more selfless and unattached every day, until at last he will reach a stage in which the results of action, —whether they are good or bad, happy or unhappy—will not disturb him any more. His sympathy also will become widened. And gradually he will come to feel himself identified with a growing circle of living beings. In the beginning it may be that he was attached to his family members. But selfless work expands his heart and by its effect, he feels himself one not only with his



relatives and friends, but also with his community, his country and finally the whole world. The orbit of his love and sympathy becomes larger than ever before. And when his identification with the whole universe becomes complete, he fails to feel either happiness or misery. He realises that he is enjoying happiness through a thousand and one beings and feeling misery through others. Whose happiness is to make him happy? And whose misery is to make him miserable? He therefore transcends ultimately all petty ideas of joys and sorrows, and dwells for ever in the serene bliss and calmness that comes out of his identification with the Highest. But until this final stage is reached, he goes on working and makes the miseries of the world his own and does his best to remove them with humility and gratitude to his Maker who has given him opportunities for his self-purification and self-development.

Karma Yoga teaches us another great lesson. It proclaims that our present condition is but the result of our past actions,—that we are what we are because of our past Karma. And in this teaching is a ray of hope for man. If we are the result of our own past Karma, then our future also is dependent on our own efforts. This then gives us the courage to mould our future and inspires us with the hope that we shall succeed if we have patience and perseverance.

If a man's Karma or work is to become a means of training his character and developing his personality, he should be deeply introspective and exceedingly humble. He should look upon even what the world considers the lowest form of service as a sacred privilege. No work should be too great or too small to deserve his attention. All the egoistic ideas of false dignity and false respect should cease to have a hold upon him. If he does any charity or renders any other form of help to anybody, he should look upon him with thankfulness and gratitude for having given him an opportunity to serve, and

thereby chasten his own character and expand his own heart. So Swami Vivekananda observed—"Do not stand on a high pedestal, do not take five cents in your hands and say 'Here, my poor man!' But be grateful that the poor man is there, so that by making a gift to him, you are able to help yourself. It is not the receiver that is blessed but the giver. . . . . No beggar whom we have helped ever owed a single cent to us, we owe everything to him, for he has allowed us to exercise our charity on him. It is entirely wrong to think that we have done or can do good to the world. It is a foolish thought and foolish thoughts bring misery. We think that we have helped some man and expect him to thank us ; and because he does not, unhappiness comes to us. Why should we expect anything in return for what we do ? Be grateful to the man you help ; think of him as God. Is it not a great privilege to worship God, by helping our fellow-men ?" From this point of view the world becomes a grand moral and spiritual gymnasium wherein we have all to take exercise in order to become stronger and stronger morally and spiritually.

This spirit of humble service and non-attachment becomes easy and natural for those who believe in a Personal God. The devotee sees all around him the manifestations of his favourite Deity. All that he is endowed with and all his wants and mishaps in life are, according to him, the result of the will of his Deity. In all the blessings and curses of the world he sees the inscrutable will of his Ishtam (Chosen Ideal). So it seems to him that it is hopeless to attain the desired result for his actions, unless it be by His will. This engenders in him a spirit of philosophic self-resignation. Through self-surrender he loses his own petty personality and fails to feel for the result of his own actions whether it is happy or unhappy. He truly realises the meaning of the teaching of Sri Krishna—"To work you have the right but not to the fruits thereof."

In these days when the country has to be roused from its age-long slumber and slothfulness, Karma Yoga has indeed a great part to play. Everywhere we see that most people are steeped in Tamas (inertia). To all appearance they are in a Sattwic state (state of calmness transcending activity), but really it is nothing but langour and inactivity. The spirit of enterprise and devotion to work and the enthusiasm and readiness that are seen in the people of the West are to be very rarely found in our own country. With no strength in body or mind and with no enthusiasm in the heart, the country presents a picture of dullness and inactivity. Without any high sense of idealism and sustained effort, the people are living a life of low contentment which arises not from a philosophic dispassion but from weak slothfulness and deep despair. We should first make our people active, enthusiastic, and undaunted in their efforts to realise their ideal. And this Karma Yoga alone can achieve. It asks us to work constantly—to do service incessantly. By it our energy will be enhanced and confidence strengthened. Slothfulness will then give place to strength, and diffidence to faith and will-power.

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## THE DOCTRINE OF EXPERIENCE AS THE ONE SELF

*By Prof. K. Sundararama Aiyar, M. A.*

### IV. THE INQUIRER'S AIM AND GOAL

**A**CCORDING to a well-known Sanskrit saying, "Not even a stupid person will set about doing anything without having some *purpose* in view." Hence, if there is to be such an activity as is implied in the fact and need of our present inquiry, its fruit (*phala*) must be stated. The Vedantist holds that there is only one Existence—the Brahman. Sankara says :—"The inquiry into the true purport of the Vakyas (sentences) of the Vedanta has for its purpose this higher bliss (*nishreyasa*)"—the Brahman, the Absolute Reality. Accord-

ing to the Taittiriya Upanishad, the Brahman is "*Sat*,"—the undifferentiated, the ever-existent (*nitya-siddha*, *nityoniya-nam*), unchanging, perfect reality. How, then, can it be a result or fruit attainable by some means, instruments, or methods of operation,—a *sadhya* or *phala*? If, indeed, it can be secured as such fruit and consequence of human activity, it must cease to be what it claims to be—"Sat" or *siddha-vastu*. Is it not also a fact that we *desire* one thing after another, and then proceed to supply some corresponding want, and gain happiness of one kind or another thereby? But that is because the supreme, ever-present, Brahman (or *Bhuma*) has become limited by association with what is *alpa* (limited)—the ever-changing, unenduring, objects belonging to the material world,—and hence both the desire for happiness and its fulfilment are transient and changing. The Upanishad says:—"There is no happiness in what is limited" (*alpa*) and therefore is without permanence. The Upanishadic terms *Bhuma*, *Brahman* mean *that which is big, unlimited*,—that which is perfect, the supremest of all. The *Taittiriya Upanishad* calls Brahman not only *Sat*, but also *Chit* (Knowledge Absolute) and *Ananda* (Bliss Absolute). Clearly it is as *Chit* that the Brahman becomes *recognised* as limited with the objects of external world. It is also clear that it is by being freed from such association and of the taint ensuing thereby that the Brahman is *realised* in its true nature (*Svarupa*) as absolute and perfect Bliss (*Ananda*). It is with such a supreme realisation (or Experience) as the purpose in view that we pursue our quest (*vichara*) after the true purport of the sentences of the Upanishads.

Even at this starting-point of our journey, we have to meet a preliminary objection,—*viz.* How can the Brahman, described or conceived of as above, be the result (*phala*) attainable (*sadhya*) by such a process of inquiry as we are going to pursue? Are we not *thereby*—i. e., by making it the goal of our inquiry—making it subject to a limitation which is foreign to its nature? On this point we can at this stage give only an unsatisfactory reply. A full and convincing answer will come on when we reach the difficult topic of *Akhandartha-Vada*. The perfect bliss (Brahman) can never be the result (*phala*) of a *particular knowledge* of any exterior object or phenomenon which owes its existence—and the transient experience we have of it—to its temporary association with—and the witness of—the Self. Now, let us take an instance,—an object before us seen as a stationary pillar when first per-

ceived from a distance, and later, when we approach near it, as a person standing where we saw the pillar before. Both are clearly instances of the *direct perception—aparoksha-jnana*—of external objects resulting (*janya*) from something like a process of reasoning. In the case of our first *false* impression of a pillar, we imagine we observe some of the signs or features of a pillar and thence infer from them that the object is—or must be—a pillar. Subsequently, we actually see the signs and features of a living human being and thence conclusively know it to be such. But, in the case of the Atman, it is neither an object actually perceived outside, as in the latter case,—nor is it one *supposed* to be so perceived, as in the vision of the pillar for which it was first mistaken. The Atman is the ever-present—*nitya*, not *janya*—absolute Experience; and so it can never appear or become like an object of the external world whose perception (or even existence) is only due to the *witness*, purely hypothetical or assumed, of the former. No such witness can exist—or needs to be assumed—in the case of the Atman. It is the one Existence (*sat*), the one Experience,—and there is no other such. Every other existence or experience is an effected (*janya*) one, and therefore limited (*parichchinna*) by time, place, etc., and has its origin in a false superposition of a material object having name and form on the one Absolute Existence or Self which has thereby to *become a witness* of the same—*i. e.*, of the object which has secured the privilege of coming within its scope and range of experience.

All effected and limited sense-enjoyments of others are to us, while they last, part and parcel of the external world and cannot, through the mere channel of oral communication, become part of the material of our sense-experience. If they do become the latter, they cease to belong to the outer world of sense, but are, while they last for us, part and parcel of what constitutes our inner and living self. At other times they *seem*, no doubt, external to us, only because they have no longer an independent existence or manifestation apart from that association with the Atman in which they had become manifested for us. Further, it is an error to hold that, because there is a difference in the source of experience, the object experienced should be also different. For, whether the source of manifestation is lamplight or sunlight, the object remains the same in form, colour, *etc.* The case is similar in regard to our true knowledge (*Prana*), whether of the external world or of the inner self. Hence the Self-Existence—*alias*

the *immediate, absolute, Experience*—revealed by the Guru's teaching of the Maha-Vakyas of the Upanishads can never be like the external and phenomenal experience *mediated by the senses and mind of man*. It can never, therefore, be a *sadhya-phala*,—a result attainable through the agency and mediacy, the causative instrumentality, of any object, internal or external, belonging to the changing material world. If it is sometimes (or often) *spoken* of as such, it is only in a secondary or figurative (*gauna* or *aupacharika*) sen. e, but not in the primary significance of the word.

Further, we may look at this question from another point of view. According to Sankara, one of the four fundamental qualifications of the inquirer (*adhikari*) into the Atman in his intense *desire* for release from the bondage of *samsara*, —“*Mumukshutva*”. The knowledge of Brahman cannot spring from a mere desire for it,—but only from the appropriate *Pramana* (or instrument of knowledge). The (Upanishad) Vakyas or sentences into whose purport we are making an inquiry (*vichara*) come in here as the proper instrument of knowledge. When this knowledge comes on, it frees us from our ignorance (of Brahman) which is the source of the misery of embodied existence. This freedom is known as Mukti. It (Mukti) alone is the *real result* (*phala*) sought for, and attainable by the *adhikari* the inquirer possessing the desire for liberation which is one of his four essential and requisite preliminary qualifications. *Then, too, as previously*, the Illumination, Experience, or Bliss, known as the one Self (or Brahman), is living and existent (*siddha*). Ignorance, and all the impediments to knowledge—whether the relative knowledge relating to phenomena in the universe, or the absolute Brahman which is one Reality—originating in ignorance have vanished. Hence the Brahman is not to be *conceived* of as the possible fruit, immediate or remote, of our inquiry, and cannot be *gained* as such result,—for, as already frequently stated, it is *nitya-siddha*, ever-present; and, therefore, no such mental effort and activity as is implied in our inquiry is needed to gain it. A result (*phala*) implies a means or instrument,—and so we are landed in Pluralism. But there is only one Existence (or Experience)—and no second. Hence the Brahman is not the result (*phala*) of our *vichara*. It is often indeed so spoken of, but only so by courtesy (*upachara*),—i. e., in a secondary, not the primary, sense of the word.

Cannot the Brahman, then, being what it is,—viz., Joy absolute, *Ananda-svarupa*—be regarded as the object of the

*Desire for liberation (mumuksha)* which is accepted as one of the four indispensable preliminary qualifications of the Inquirer into Brahman? Let us first state definitely what is *Mukti*. It is the destruction of the primordial matter (*prakriti*, *Maya*, *ajnana*, *avyakta*, all of which are synonymous terms, as Sankara frequently explains) which is the positive root-cause (*bhavarupa mula-karana*) of the manifested universe of material objects. That process of destruction arises from the immediately previous final mental modification (*Charama-manovritti*) which rises into manifestation as a result of the teaching of the Vakyas (sentences) of the Vedanta, but unfailingly also disappears itself in bringing about that process;—and then the sun of the Atman is no longer clouded by the cloud of matter, but shines in all its own everlasting (*nitya-siddha*) glory of self-effulgence (*svayam prakasa*). The usual illustration given in this connection is the dust of the clearing-nut (*kathakaronu*), which, when cast into a vessel of muddy water, goes down to the bottom taking with it also the mud in the water. The Vedanta holds that the destruction of the bondage of *samsara* (arising from the *charama-manovritti* already spoken of) can become the object of desire,—the *mumuksha* (or desire for liberation) which is included as one of the four qualifications essential to the Inquirer after Brahman. The Nyaya and Vaisheshika systems of philosophy hold that this negative process of destruction (*dhwamsa*) of the pains and penalties of material existence alone constitutes *mukti*, and there is no positive joy of the spiritual kind transcending it.

The one great rival of the Doctrine of Experience as the One Self in the India of the past has been that held by the Mimamsakas—viz., that the soul of man is an indispensable part and ancillary (*anga*, or *sesha*) of all Vedic *karmas* (rituals) and that the knowledge gained by the study of, and inquiry into, the purport of the sentences of the Veda is meant only to enable the householder to duly perform those rituals. *Mukti*, according to the Mimamsakas, is only at best a particular kind of satisfaction (*sukha-visesha*) resulting from the rituals,—and even this is only an assumption. For, where any results in the shape of enjoyments here or in higher worlds are stated in the Vedas, the aim is only to extol the value and need of the rituals and persuade men to engage themselves ardently in their due performance. The same is also the purport of the passages of the Upanishads where the soul's real nature (*svarupa*) is described as pure and perfect, everlasting bliss, and so on. The inquiry into the Self is needed and pre-

scribed,—but its object is only to convince the inquirer that the aim of the Vedas is only to establish the doctrine of ritualism, —to convince every human being that he is an intelligent person over and above his physical organism so as to create in him an interest in the proper performance of all Vedic sacrifices and other rituals. In the technical language of latter days, the aim of Vedic inquiry is *Kratvartha* (to promote the performance of rituals), and not *purushartha*, to secure a future state of enjoyment in a world beyond this or to secure the grace of a supreme God in his own world and perfect bliss beyond the sphere of matter. This is why it is pointed out (*vide* Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad, III. 1) that even men like King Janaka who had the knowledge of Brahman, “performed Yajna, making many gifts.” If mere knowledge of the Self is the aim of the inquiry, why should they perform Karmas involving enormous exertions and responsibilities of diverse kinds? Further, there are even found passages in the Upanishads themselves (Chandogya, I. 1 10; Brihadaranyaka, IV. 4, 2) which expressly state that knowledge (of the Self) has no independent value and must be combined with Karma in order to secure or enhance such value,—and so it is only an auxiliary (*sahakari*) of Karma. There are also passages which expressly declare that a full knowledge of the real purport of the Vedas is specially needed for the due performance of the householder’s daily duties (*nitya-karmas*).

Sankaracharya, after elaborating as above the special pleading of the Mimamsakas, takes similar pains to demolish it. In the *first* place, the Upanishads are simply content with *extolling* Karmas so as to induce ritualistic activity. Or, in the *second* place, the Karmas mentioned have another intent and bearing (*anyatha-siddha*), as relating to *loka-sangraha* (*vide Bhagavad-Gita*)—the welfare of all humanity as a whole by the abandoning of all activities which proceed from purely egoistic motives, and so not producing a binding effect on the doer. Sankara offers many other arguments, and entirely overthrows the Mimamsaka view. (*Vide Purushartha-adhikarana*, Chap. III, Pada 4 of the Brahama Sutras of Vyasa). The same topic is also dealt with at great length by Sankara in his Bhashya on (I. 1-4). We do not here need to enlarge further on this topic. Sankara similarly overthrows (I. 1-4) also the view that the Vedanta prescribes *pratipatti upasana*, or *bhakti*—(all these being synonymous terms)—of the supreme personal Deity.



Vyasa would not have begun his Brahma-Sutras as altogether a separate treatise and system of doctrine (*darsana*) from the Karma (or Purva) Mimamsa, had he not felt that it required a different *adhikari* (person qualified) for fully profiting by it. Hence, also, Sankara maintains that the qualification for realising the absolute Experience which is the one Self is altogether different from the mere performance of Vedic rituals, or even of the worship of the supreme Deity who creates and sustains the universe. Sankara points out that "the innermost self—the light of which destroys the (beginningless) ignorance together with the binding *Karma-vasanas* hidden in the mind, and which is no longer the incarnating jiva, but the pure absolute Brahman—can no longer be transformed so as to prove merely an indispensable adjunct and limb of Vedic rituals." The Vedanta aims at teaching that the soul of man is, indeed, not merely the living and intelligent doer (*Karta*) and *bhokta* (enjoyer) different from his body which, without his presence, is only a mass of inert matter, but that it is to be known (*vedya*) in its true nature as *asamsari*, one not roving about in birth after birth in the world of phenomena, but the one innermost Self which is all Experience and Bliss, pure and absolute. Such a realisation of the one supreme Entity can never lead to activity,—for it transcends the entire phenomenal universe (of activity). Several Upanishadic passages contain *indications* (*darsanas*—i. e., *lingas*—vide Brahma-Sutras, III. 4-8 and 9) showing that those who have realised the absolute Experience as the one Self are free from all Karmas. If there are also passages seemingly contradictory, a careful inquiry into their purport will unfailingly show either that they refer to the *sopadhika* (conditioned) Brahman, or to some *karma* or *upasana* taught in the Vedas. In this connection Sankara especially refers to the passage in the Kenopanishad (I. 4) which denies over and over again that Brahman is the object of the act of *upasana*. He also refers to Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad (II. 4, 13) which denies that it is the object of the mere mental activity of knowing. The Brahman then in its truth and essence, is the innermost Self, Experience, Knowledge, or Consciousness,—the one pure and absolute Existence.

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## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### THE MYSORE UNIVERSITY CONVOCATION ADDRESS

His Highness the Chancellor of the Mysore University could not have invited an educationist more inspiring and patriotic than Sir P. C. Ray to address the convocation this year. The great educationist gave an illuminating criticism on 'the colossal waste of national intelligence' which has resulted in the past from our scheme of University education. It deserves the attention of every true lover of India.

Without indulging in the ceremonial sentimentalisms of the ordinary convocation address, Sir P. C. Ray exposed in all its shallow superficiality the myth of modern University development in our land. He justly characterised the evil of multiplying stereotyped universities without regard to regional considerations as 'wanton' and entailing waste of economic power. He also deplored the neglect of the creative capacity of the Indian intellect. According to him, the lamentable lack of sagacity and intelligence in the handling of the Indian educational problem has been mainly responsible for our intellectual sterility. A foreign language has been tolerated so long, and still in many quarters upheld, as the best vehicle of instruction. A routine of lectures and exercises and other compulsory appendages not far removed from those of a secondary school are increasing the distance between the multitude of students and the teacher, and a spirit of exclusiveness insisting on an 'infallible' preparatory education were the chief defects of our university system, which were pointed out with penetrating sympathy by the revered educationist of Bengal. He lamented the degeneration of our land caused by our forgetting the austere and sustaining ideals of life. And he hoped for the day when the rising generation can, through increased knowledge, "combat and banish disease, enliven all homes by prosperity and raise the human species to a much nobler height of intelligence."

The ideal of ancient Indian universities was to preserve the treasured wisdom of the country. Hence there was everywhere a conscious adaptation of the means to the end. Regional and 'religious' variations in types and curricula were devised. The spirit of independent research was fostered with munificence. And there was, therefore, a vigorous circulation of the intellectual life-blood throughout the social organism. But under the present university system which has been transplanted from a foreign country, the ancient educational ideal has been lost. And Sir P. C. Ray's profound and penetrating analysis gives us an idea of the gigantic task that is before our country in the sphere of education.

## THE DEMOCRATIC IDEAL

The cry of *Vive la republique* is heard everywhere, but true democracy is practised neither in the state nor in society, whether in the East or in the West. The democratic ideal is good and all right, but there is a lack of proper application of the ideal. It is due to this lack that so many evils both political and social exist to-day.

In the course of an address delivered before the Fourteenth Annual Convention of the Hindusthan Association of America, Boston, and published in a recent issue of the *Welfare*, Dr. William H. Burnham, Ph. D., Professor of Clark University, U. S. A., dwelt on the defects of democratic institutions and their remedies as well. In his opinion, the drawbacks of the nation are mainly due to the training imparted to youngsters at the home and the school. If the defects of this training are removed, the other evils will disappear by themselves. Dr. Burnham observes—"The defects of American democracy are obvious. It is not necessary to dwell upon them. The obvious defects, however, those one reads about, those one meets everywhere, the assertion of individual interest against the public welfare, social, educational and personal craft and group profiteering, and the like, all these are not the serious defects, bad as they are ; but the really serious thing from the educational point of view are the low level of what may be called social metabolism, the daily robbing of children of their legitimate tasks, the robbing them of the opportunity to take responsibility, repression of what is relatively bad instead of the integration of qualities and abilities that are good, the dominance of educational groups by pleasing and masterful personalities, who often repress, it is true, in a pleasing and magnanimous manner, but who nevertheless take away the opportunity for group training and make group democracy impossible."

Real democratic institutions will be possible only when man will be able to look upon man not merely as his fellow-being but as a part of his own self, when self-sacrifice will be prized above self-protection and self-preservation, and when hatred, jealousy and selfishness will be banished from the human mind by the spirit of universal love and service.

## THE BRITISH COUNCIL OF SOCIAL HYGIENE—ITS WORK

Civilisation consists in the process of idealisation of the primitive instincts of the animal man,—in the progressive subjugation of his acquisitive, gregarious, pugilistic, preservative, procreative and other instincts. He has been trying for several centuries to evolve himself. And with the progress of his evolution, he discovered the path to perfection by the control of his lower nature. The acquisitive instinct has been chasten-

ed by charity and by duties to the family and community. The gregarious instinct has been diverted into clubs and conferences, parties and sects. The pugilistic instinct has been softened by healthy rivalries and friendly emulation. The preservative instinct has been transformed into love of freedom and love of country and trained to welcome even extinction of the individual. In Ancient India, the rigorous discipline of Varnashrama Dharma, combined with the worship of the woman as mother, the exaltation of marriage as a sacrament and the belief in the son as 'saviour of the Pitris (manes)' had ennobled and controlled even the sex instinct. Of late however, because of the general wane of Hindu cultural influences, we have lost sight of these healthy disciplines and hence, the need for an active propaganda on behalf of Social Hygiene has become as necessary here as in England and other Western Countries. The British Council of Social Hygiene has as its aims the promotion of educative and social measures directed towards the control of the sex instinct, the setting up of a high and equal standard of sex conduct in men and women and the elimination of commercialised vice. And with characteristic thoroughness the Council inaugurated only six years ago has now provided facilities for the treatment of venereal diseases which have been found to be a monstrous scourge of man. Through lectures to parents, teachers and social workers it has also spread a knowledge of the suicidal dangers of sexual misconduct and, more than all, provided wholesome recreations and counter-attractions for the youth of the nation. It is a happy sign that the delegates of the council who are organising local councils in India are keenly alive to the invaluable influence of high ideals in promoting social hygiene through chastity. An innate sense of purity and responsibility and the courage to check the urge of low desire can alone save the youth of our land. In India, a call couched in terms of such ideals will not fall on deaf ears. For, here more than anywhere else, release from bondage to the senses—from the bondage of matter to the freedom of the spirit—has been the ever present ideal of life. And any deviation from the ancient ideal of Brahmacharyam (celibacy) in our country can, at the most, be only a temporary stupefaction from which the young men and women of to-day are sure to rouse themselves.

#### SIR J. C. BOSE—THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HIS WORK

The marvellous contributions of Sir J. C. Bose to science are likely to widen man's outlook on life. They are entirely different from those of most other scientists. Bose may be taken to be a mere dreamer by the workaday man, but his discoveries are slowly opening out the reserves of thought and culture of India to the world.

"In plain words," one may ask, "what has Bose done?" To begin with, he has proved that all life is one. He has shown, as Major Francis Yeats-Brown writes in the *Indian National Herald*, "that there is a basic unity in composition, in thought, and in response to outer stimulus, that runs through all matter, however apparently inert or however palpitatingly alive. A steel girder will grow tired of a burden even as you grow weary of a weight. A plant needs sleep, feels passion, winces when struck even as a man does, although in a different (but not always a lesser) degree. These things have been drawn out in diagrams and charted in graphs which are the result of accurate experiment in a laboratory."

The next great truth that Bose has demonstrated is that adversity is necessary throughout the order of nature for the development of the powers of an organism. "As an ethical point, this has long been known, but to prove it on a black-board was another matter. This is how Bose does it: he takes—say—a mimosa as his subject and allows it to grow up in his institute carefully shielded from any harmful contact with the outer world. Just so much air and food and light are allowed to reach it—no more and no less than the absolute theoretical ideal for its health and happiness. The mimosa apparently flourishes under this regimen and grows into a prosperous plant. But appearances are deceptive: there is a rottenness in the being of that mimosa. It degenerates in its nervous fibre just as a person that has never been tempered at the fire of sorrow, or borne adversity, cannot be a full man or woman. The pampered plant cannot react as a mimosa should to 'stimuli' from without. Its nervous reflex-arc has contracted. There is a slowing down of that mysterious vital force, concerning which Sir Jagadish (just because he has come closer to it than any other living man) does not presume to theorise."

Sir J. C. Bose is a true child of ancient Aryan culture. He is giving the same message that it has to give to the world, but this he does in the words of science, which are suited to modern times. According to the Western standard, man is to be up and doing—live a life of intense activity and leave this world materially happier and more prosperous. The West understands the doer, not the idealist. But Sir J. C. Bose "has married the deathless and virile beauty of the Aryan tradition to the still adolescent debutante of Western science." He himself declares that he is preaching the same truth that his ancestors realised through meditation thousands of years ago.

When one contemplates on how Sir Jagadish has made a romance of science, one is also inclined to prophesy that the time is sure to come sooner or later when all arts and sciences will move round Truth as

their centre. Art—whether painting, sculpture, architecture, poetry or music—will show to every man the way to Eternal Beauty and Ineffable Bliss. Science—whether physics, chemistry, astronomy or any other—will point its finger to the One Existence sung by the Rishis in the immortal Vedas.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### SRIMAT SWAMI SHIVANANDA

Srimat Swami Shivananda, President of the Ramakrishna Mission was staying at Mylapore since his return from Bangalore to Madras on the 18th November last. At the invitation of the public of Nattarampalli he went to that place on the 6th December, accompanied by Swami Yatiswarananda, Head of the Mission at Madras. In the course of his short stay of five days there he laid the foundation stone of the Ramakrishna Industrial Students' Home, and visited the local Panchayat School. The visit created great enthusiasm amongst the students to whom he spoke a few words of advice and arranged for sweetmeat to be distributed. He returned to Madras on the 10th and started for Bombay on the 19th. He halted for a day at Raichur on the way and reached Bombay on the 22nd.

### THE RAMAKRISHNA INDUSTRIAL STUDENTS' HOME, NATTARAMPALLI

The foundation stone of this Home was laid on Friday the 10th December by Srimat Swami Shivananda in a plot of land measuring about five acres. The plot is situated a furlong and a half from the Ramakrishna Math at Nattarampalli and was made over to the Mission by the Panchayat of the place. A large number of people from the neighbouring villages and towns attended the function. A decorated portrait of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna was taken in the midst of Bhajana in a procession headed by Srimat Swami Shivananda. When the procession reached the pandal erected for the foundation ceremony, an address of welcome was presented to the Swami by the public of Nattarampalli, in which he was requested to lay the foundation stone of the Home and confer his blessings on it. On being asked by the Swami to reply on his behalf, Swami Yatiswarananda spoke in English appreciating the earnestness and devotion of the public of Nattarampalli and invoking the blessings of Sri Ramakrishna on their noble endeavour. Swami Kedareshwarananda who is in charge of the Ramakrishna Math at Nattarampalli and Mr. C. Venkataswami Naidu of Vaniyambady

also spoke a few words in Tamil suited to the occasion. In the midst of cheers Srimat Swami Shivananda then laid the first bricks of the foundation using mortar with a silver trowel. All those who had assembled then returned to the Math, and with the distribution of Prasad the function came to a close.

#### SWAMI YATISWARANANDA AT BOMBAY

At the invitation of friends interested in the Ramakrishna Mission at Bombay Swami Yatiswarananda left Madras on the 19th December. The Swami was in charge of the Ramakrishna Ashrama at Bombay for over a year and a half. In March last he had been to the Head-quarters of the Mission at Belur to attend the Ramakrishna Math and Mission Convention. He was to have gone back to Bombay after the convention but had to come direct to Mylapore to take charge of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission Branch at Madras. The friends and workers of the Mission at Bombay, who were eagerly expecting him to be in their midst again were keenly disappointed at this. When the Swami was invited to attend the installation ceremony in the newly-built shrine at Khar, he took the opportunity to be once again in Bombay and left Madras in the company of Srimat Swami Shivananda.

#### THE NIRANJANA ASHRAMA, OTTAPALAM, SOUTH MALABAR

This Ashrama which has been named after Srimat Swami Niranjanananda who was one of the most beloved disciples of Sri Ramakrishna was opened with great eclat on Friday the 10th December by Srimat Swami Nirmalananda, President of the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore. It is situated a mile and a half from the Ottapalam Railway Station, on an elevated and extensive plot of land on the right bank of the Bharata river, and commands a charming view of the stream, fields and hills. Devotees from several parts of Kerala had assembled on the occasion. The formal opening ceremony took place in the midst of Bhajana conducted by several Sankirtan parties of the neighbouring villages. In the afternoon Prasad was distributed to all present. In the evening Srimat Swami Nirmalananda gave an inspiring discourse in which he dwelt on the divinity in man, the problems confronting the modern world, and the duty of India at the present day.

On the 11th a large number of poor people were sumptuously fed. And in response to an invitation from a village near the Ashrama, Swami Nirmalananda visited it and spoke to those assembled on Dharma.

On the 12th Swami Niranjanananda and Swami Vageeswarananda explained the aims and objects of the Mission at a public meeting which was held in the local High School.

All these functions left a profound impression on the public of Ottapalam. And the new Ashrama has removed a long-felt want of a centre of the Mission in South Malabar.

#### SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, DINAJPUR, BENGAL.

The work of this Ashrama can be classified under three heads—religious, educational and philanthropic. The Ashrama has a shrine room where daily worship is conducted. It also holds a religious class everyday for all people, irrespective of caste or creed. Besides, it has a small library of its own. In the out-door dispensary attached to the Ashrama, the number of patients treated during 1925, the year under review, was 3,573, 1,650 being new and 1,014 repeated cases. The Kala-azar Department had 163 patients in its register, who were treated with injections and allopathic medicines. Cremation of dead bodies, distribution of blankets to the poor during winter, occasional help to poor students and indigent families in coin or in kind and house-to-house medical relief also formed part of the philanthropic activities of the Ashrama.

The total receipts during the year including previous year's balance of Rs. 50-13-0 were Rs. 1037-3-3 and the expenditure was Rs. 923-2-9, the balance left being Rs. 114-0-6.

The Ashrama stands in need of a permanent building of its own estimated at Rs. 20,000 and appeals to the generous public for help and active sympathy.

#### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, KANKHAL, HARDWAR

The twenty-fifth annual report of this Sevashrama shows that its philanthropic activities have been steadily growing since its inception in 1901.

The total number of cases treated in the outdoor dispensary was 45,626 of which 19,966 were new cases. The indoor hospital which has provided accommodation for 66 patients admitted 602 sick persons during 1925, the year under review. The Sevashrama conducts also a free night school which imparts primary education to the boys of the depressed classes, the number on the roll being 41. The Ashrama has also a small library containing 1,775 books for the use of its own workers and the public.

The Sevashrama which is situated in one of the most ancient and sacred places of pilgrimage is thus doing excellent philanthropic work. Its increasing usefulness is evident from the fact that there were 602 indoor and 19,966 outdoor patients in 1925 as against 42 and 178 in 1901.

The Sevashrama stands in urgent need of (1) worker's quarters, (2) a building for the night school, (3) a guest house or Dharmasala, (4) a rest house for the friends and relatives of the indoor patients,



(5) a permanent fund for the Sevashrama and (6) resources for equipment and general maintenance of the Sevashrama. It appeals to the generous public for help.

Contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged by Swami Kalyanananda, Hony. Secy., Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, P. O. Kankhal, Dt. Saharanpur, or the President, Ramakrishna Mission, P. O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah, or the Manager, Udbodhan Office, 1 Mukerji's Lane, P. O. Baghbazar, Calcutta.

#### PURNA KUMBHA MELA AT HARDWAR—AN APPEAL

The Purna Kumbha Mela, one of the greatest religious festivals of the Hindus, comes off at Hardwar after a lapse of twelve years during the next spring of 1927. On account of improvement and expansion of roads and railways, a far larger number of pilgrims are expected to congregate this time than during the previous Kumbha Melas. The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama at Kankhal, Hardwar, which has been silently rendering medical service to the poor patients of the locality and to the pilgrims who visit this sacred place, for the last quarter of a century, will try its level best to alleviate the sufferings of the sick and helpless pilgrims on this important occasion.

The work that will be taken up by the Sevashrama will comprise of the following items :—

(i) Permanent Hospital Relief Section—This will contain 1 doctor, 2 compounders, 1 dresser and several nurses. They will be in charge of the permanent hospitals, both indoor and outdoor, except the cholera section.

(ii) Temporary Relief Section—In this section, there will be, a doctor, a compounder and two nurses who will go round everyday from camp to camp to find out patients who are unable to come to the Sevashrama and treat them there. They also will inform the headquarters when they find cases of patients requiring removal to the hospital.

(iii) Special Cholera Relief Section—This department will consist of three groups of volunteers. One party of the volunteers will be in charge of the nursing department of cholera patients in a special ward throughout day and night. Another batch of workers will bring the cholera patients in ambulance cars and burn corpses. And the third group will consist of four workers who will disinfect the places from which the cholera patients are brought and in which others suffer from serious diseases.

(iv) Kitchen section—The workers of this section will take charge of the kitchen and stores and prepare food for the patients, workers and guests.

The Sevashrama with the limited number of workers and the funds at their disposal is rendering help to many helpless and poor patients. And more men and money will be required for giving relief during the Kumbha Mela, as a large number of pilgrims will flock on that occasion. Many trained doctors and volunteers will have to be brought from outside and medicines and other necessities will have to be purchased beforehand. The expenditure has been approximately estimated at Rs. 10,000. The Sevashrama appeals to the public for contributions. They may be sent to Swami Kalyananda, Hony. Secy., Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal, P. O. Saharapur District, or to the President, Ramakrishna Mission, P. O. Belur Math, District Howrah.

#### SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENTS' HOME, MADRAS

Sir P. C. Ray, the veteran educationist of Bengal, visited the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home at Mylapore, Madras on Tuesday the 30th November last. He was taken round the buildings of the Home, the Residential High School and the Technical Institute by Swami Saswatananda, the Resident Warden of the Home and Swami Devatmananda, the General Superintendent of the Technical Section. He took more than an hour to visit the several departments and evinced keen interest in all he saw. After attending the evening Puja he addressed the students on the impressions of his visit. In the course of his speech he observed:—"I have seen and visited many educational institutions in various parts of India managed by the public as well as by the Government; but nowhere have I seen an institution of this type. I have been taken by surprise and I could not even dream that I would see such things as I saw here to-day. Everything I have seen seems to be Maya—I could not believe my eyes. Wherever I go, I am struck with the spotless cleanliness of the place. You know "Cleanliness is next to Godliness," and I feel as if the whole environment is surcharged with a divine atmosphere. I consider this day of my visit to your institution a red-letter day in my life. And I congratulate you all on your good fortune in having come under the roof of a noble institution where you are trained to make no distinction between "high and low". One noble feature of this institution is the endeavour put forth to make you self-supporting. I have noticed with great pleasure that you are taught carpentry, weaving, carpet-making, smithy and rattan work here. I am also glad to note that every one washes his own clothes and plates himself.... Your duty is to carry the spirit which you have imbibed here to the world outside when you go away from this institution. The motto of your life should be "Service to your country". I am very glad that the Gita which is full of noble precepts is being studied here by you all. You should cultivate the spirit of patriotism—of genuine love for your

country. By self-sacrifice alone real patriotism will be aroused. In Japan, patriotism is the religion of the people. The same family may have members of diverse faiths but they one and all profess the same religion—patriotism. I have been really struck with the catholicity of view in this place, especially the puja-hall, where there are nice and beautiful paintings of the teachers of all religions. I am glad you are taught that in all religions the fundamental principles are the same." And before concluding Acharya Ray exhorted the students in an inspiring manner by saying: "You live in a clean and moral atmosphere. Each one of you should rise as an electric light of unlimited candle power. When you go out after your training, I am sure you will, with your radiating effulgence, illumine the depths of darkness of the masses."

#### THE RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, KHAR, BOMBAY

The installation ceremony in the newly-built shrine of the Ramakrishna Ashrama at Khar, Bombay, was performed by Srīmat Swami Shivananda, President of the Ramakrishna Mission, on Sunday the 26th December.

#### THE SIXTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY OF SRIMAT SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

The Sixty-fifth Birthday Anniversary of Srīmat Swami Vivekananda will be celebrated at the Ramakrishna Math, Brodies Road, Mylapore, Madras, on Sunday, the 30th January. We request all Maths, Ashramas and Societies observing the birthday to kindly send us the reports of their celebrations at an early date.

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# THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want  
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold  
The Upanishads and believe that ‘ I am the Atman.’ ”

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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## P R A Y E R

नैव किञ्चित्परोक्षं ते प्रत्यक्षोऽसि न कस्यचित् ।  
नैव किञ्चिदसिद्धं ते न च सिद्धोऽसि कस्यचित् ॥  
कार्याणां कारणं पूर्वं वचसां वाच्यमुत्तमम् ।  
योगानां परमां सिद्धिं परमं ते पदं विदुः ॥  
पाहि पाहि जगन्नाथ कृपया भक्तवत्सल ।  
अनाथोऽहमधन्योऽहमकृतार्थः कथंचनः ॥

O Lord! Nothing is beyond Thy ken, yet Thou art not fully perceived by any. Nothing is unrealised by Thee, yet none has been able to realise Thee.

The sages know Thee to be the Primary Cause of all things, the Highest Predicate of all words, and the *summum bonum* of all Yogas.

Lord of the universe! Lover of Thy devotees! With Thy grace save me, save me—a helpless, unhappy and unsuccessful creature that I am!

THE MAHABHARATA.

## ·SPIRITUAL TALKS OF ŚWAMI BRAHMANANDA

(*At the Belur Math*)

**S**RI Ramakrishna used to say that a person can attain to God if he possesses the intensity of this three-fold love—the love that a devoted wife bears her husband, the attraction that a worldly man feels for the world, and the attachment that the miser possesses for his hoarded gold. Intense yearning of this kind is sure to enable one to realise God. Do you know what it means? It means that one can reach the Lord and be blessed with His vision and spiritual touch the moment the mind is cleansed of all desires and filled with a sincere hankering after God-realisation. The Lord says in the Gita— सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज ‘Relinquishing all duties, take refuge in Me alone.’

Self-surrender, self-surrender, self-surrender—that is the only way and there is no other. In this iron age (Kali Yuga) man depends on food and is short-lived. And he has to do many things in this short span of life. He possesses very little of the energy, strength, renunciation, courage and spirit of penance, that are essential for God-realisation. His mind is weak, and it naturally runs after enjoyment. But in spite of all this, God has to be realised. Without it life is spent in vain; one comes into the world and goes out of it without accomplishing anything worthy. Man must therefore realise God, but verily there is no path easier than self-surrender.

What do we understand by self-surrender? Does it mean that we have not to do anything,—that we have only to be sitting quiet? No, it doesn't mean that. The devotee has to pray constantly with a pure heart in this manner,—“Oh Lord! I do not know what is good and

what is bad for me. I am solely dependent on Thee. Grant unto me all that I need for spiritual life. Take me along the path that will do me good. Vouchsafe unto me the faith and strength to constantly remember Thee and meditate on Thee." It is indeed no easy thing to dedicate oneself heart and soul to the Lord.

Many people say: "I have surrendered myself,—my all—to God. I am doing as He is making me do." But if we observe their life, we would see that their actions are quite contrary to what they profess. If they do anything good, they take the credit for themselves, feel highly elated over it, and think 'Oh what a great thing, I have achieved.' But when even a slight trouble besets them, they immediately throw the blame on the Lord, saying, "what a great misfortune He is bringing on me." This is how most people spend their life. We judge men only by their externals, but God looks into their innermost minds. God runs to him for help who prays with a sincere heart. Know this as certain. Be pure at heart. Let not your words be different from your thoughts, and God will reward you according to your deserts.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say—"If you do one-sixteenth part of the Sadhana (spiritual practices) that I have done, it is enough." He has made Sadhana so very easy for us. But we are so indolent and lazy that we shirk our work and fail in our duty. And by doing so, we greatly deceive ourselves. Even if some one gives us good things to eat we still want them to be put into our mouth. There are many who request me to bless them. I cannot help laughing within myself, when I hear them. They don't do as I instruct them. In fact the moment they leave my presence, they do whatever they like. If I ask any one of them whether he follows my instructions, he would reply, "No, Sir, I had no time to do it," or say, "weak and evil-minded as I am, I was not able to do it." Those who have no sincere desire to follow me and have no faith in me may do anything they like without asking me. But this they won't

do—they won't follow my instructions and yet want to be blessed by me. They want to attain spiritual realisation without the necessary exertion,—by mere dodging. Don't you see that when such people come, I usually while away the time in aimless talk—in cracking jokes and making fun. What is the use of tiring myself for nothing, in speaking of spiritual practices to people who won't follow them? I speak of higher matters only to a very few, who I think, would take my word and act up to it. But even they don't follow the instructions fully and properly. Always accustomed to shirking work, they want to attain everything without any effort.

There is no dearth of Divine grace. The trouble is that men don't care to avail themselves of it. They take pleasure in idle gossip only. None wants to realise the supreme truth. Man takes pride in indulging in tall talks and empty twaddle—that is how he spends his life. And as he sows, so he reaps. 'Teachers can be had by thousands, but rare indeed is a true disciple.' There are many to take up the role of teachers, but where are the men to hear and follow their teachings? If one goes on striving for a higher life, with strong faith in the words of one's Guru, then there is an end to all one's miseries. He who has such faith need not run about here and there with a restless mind. The Lord looks to all his wants. He takes him by the hand along the right path. Indeed there is no anxiety for him who has been blessed by the Lord.

It is given only to one in a million to cherish noble desires and sublime thoughts, and of such souls as are so privileged a very few only can stick to their ideals to the last. Those persons in whose minds good thoughts have already sprung should try their utmost to strengthen and make them permanent. And in order to keep up their fervour, they should be always praying to the Almighty, "Vouchsafe unto us, O Lord, Thy grace! May it be on us for ever!" Sri Ramakrishna used to

say—"To all appearance the maid-servant in a house looks upon all that belongs to her Master as her own, but in her heart of hearts she knows that they don't belong to her at all." So long as we live we have to do our work without attachment. We should know in our heart of hearts that this world is not our permanent home but only a temporary abode. And we should direct our mind to God—the heavenly home whence we came.

How many care for Truth or God? Puffed up with pride man sometimes raises himself to such a high pedestal that he totally denies even the existence of God. Everyone thinks himself to be infallible and his way is the only way to salvation. Do you know what he would say? He would tell, "we don't accept what we cannot understand." But he little thinks how insignificant is his power of comprehension! What he thinks as right to-day, he gives up as false tomorrow. Thus his opinion changes from time to time. In making a parade of his knowledge, he does not care a straw for what is high and noble. The Divine Mother alone knows in how many ways man is deluded.

Every person conceives of God in his own little individual way. But our conception of the Lord should not be so limited, for He is all-comprehensive. He is not perceptible to the mind and intellect. He alone can realise God's nature, to whom He is pleased to reveal His mysteries. And when He is realised, the gates of knowledge are opened, the knots of the heart are cut asunder and infinite wisdom is attained. Only when man realises this state, can he fully understand the relation between God and himself—that the Lord is his own and he is the Lord's.

Man cannot attain any knowledge unless the Mother reveals it. The mysteries of this world and the next will be revealed only when She discloses them to him out of Her mercy. The intellect, as ordinarily



understood, is not the real intellect. Its area—its range—is very limited. Those who want to gain real bliss in life, those who really desire to solve its intricate problems,—‘who am I?’ ‘what have I come here for?’ ‘why am I suffering from so much misery?’ ‘why does one man attain to God-hood and another remains a mere brute?’—their one and only duty is to realise God by all possible means. Life’s knotty problems will be solved the moment He is realised.

Children find joy in gyrating round a pillar by holding it firmly. But do you know wherein is fixed their attention? It is in the pillar, for they know it full well that if they loosen their grip they will fall down and be injured. So first of all hold fast to the pillar of life, then you may go on circling round it as many times as you like. And there will be no fear of falling down. Our first and foremost duty in life is to realise God. Know He is the Pillar of life. Whatever you do, do by clasping unto Him—you won’t then take any false step and won’t fall. What you do will be perfectly right and will be for the good of yourself and of the world as well. Blessed, then, will be your life on earth.

## EDITORIAL NOTES

### MISUNDERSTANDING OF THE CASTE SYSTEM

**T**HERE exists a great misunderstanding about the Hindu social order popularly known as the system of caste. Foreigners whose knowledge of Hindu society is just enough to misunderstand it, criticise this time-honoured institution, forgetting the fact that their society too contains invidious distinctions of a somewhat different, if not of a worse kind. The modernised Hindu, who often tries to import the concepts of the Western social order into his own, also finds fault with the Hindu socio-religious system. He sometimes prides himself to be a

“conformist” which means that he follows the customs of his society in a grudging spirit, but has not the strength to do what he thinks to be right. In reality the “conformist” usually knows as little of the ideals underlying the caste system as does the Western critic. It is also a tragic fact that even many of our modern reformers have failed to realise the fundamental ideals of the Hindu social system. And carried away by their enthusiasm, they have tried to start “puritan” movements, which being cut away from the life-current of the main society, have degenerated into narrow sects likely to be re-absorbed into the mother church at no distant date. But the reformers have rendered great service to the entire community in one way. They have pointed out the abuses and iniquities cropping up in Hindu society which has been reforming and re-adjusting itself from time to time, and thereby getting a fresh lease of life. Indeed, reform movements themselves are in reality the expressions of the inexhaustible vitality of Hindu society out of which they come into being and to which they go back after playing their part.

#### THE EVILS OF THE PRESENT SOCIAL ORDER

No social order can claim to be perfect and free from abuses. In the Western society there exist race prejudice and class-snobbery in a form unknown in India. In Hindu society, on the other hand, there prevail invidious distinctions of caste and the terrible curse of untouchability, which stand as the greatest obstacles in the path of its progress. The higher castes want to arrogate to themselves certain privileges without caring for the performance of the duties incumbent on them. The poor Sudra has to suffer an amount of social injustice at the hands of the upper castes. But the lot of the out-caste, euphemistically called the Panchama or the fifth caste, is very hard indeed. However good and pure he may be, he is treated worse than a dog. A low-caste Hindu may not be allowed to touch, nay even to approach, his high-

caste co-religionist in certain parts of South India which are the hot-beds of caste prejudice. But when the same person mutters a few words and changes his religious label, he miraculously ceases to be untouchable and unapproachable, and rises in social status. Fortunately for India the present-day caste system is losing its rigour, and with it the curse of untouchability is slowly passing away in spite of the cry of a certain class of religious fanatics. And what is a very happy sign of the-times is that some of the members of the highest caste are working for the amelioration of the depressed and the down-trodden. The spirit of all-inclusiveness is thus gaining ascendancy over that of exclusiveness.

#### CONSERVATISM VERSUS LIBERALISM

The process of social evolution is a conflict between the two opposite forces of conservatism and liberalism. The one tends to create social exclusiveness and raise insurmountable barriers between different social groups, while the other stands for unity and equality, and aims at breaking down all unjust distinctions and privileges that come upon human society "like the shadow of death". These two opposite currents of thought have dominated the minds of the Indo-Aryan race as those of all the other races of the world. In studying the past history of the Hindu social system we find that, as in all other systems, the vast majority of people, simply because of their inability to think for themselves, followed blindly in the footsteps of their forefathers, observing only the forms they followed but without understanding their meaning. The thoughtful few alone could realise the ideal which actuated their ancestors to build up the grand socio-religious structure known as the Varnashrama Dharma. And it was they who saved Hindu society from degenerating into a lifeless organism. They asserted at all the momentous periods of India's history the eternal principles which have endowed the Hindu social system with an inexhaustible power and vitality.

## THE TRIALS OF HINDU SOCIETY

Exclusiveness is a necessary evil in the growth of all social systems. Like a tender plant the social organism is to be protected by the hedge of laws and restrictions against outside dangers, and this particularly during the early days of its evolution. Even after it has grown sufficiently, it may need especial safeguards during times of trouble. The ancient Aryan society had to grow struggling hard against heavy odds. In the words of E. B. Havell, "Indo-Aryan sociology as regards the caste system was admirably conceived, under the peculiar conditions in which Aryan society found itself in India, for preserving its higher culture from degradation by contact with the semi-civilised races which formed the substrata of the population." The great task before the ancients was the preservation of the spiritual culture which was the very soul of the Aryan civilisation. Not only during the very early days but also later on, Hindu society had to raise round it the defensive walls of fresh social laws preventing its members from coming in contact with the followers of its rebel child Buddhism. After the wave of Buddhism passed away, there came into India the militant religion of Mohammed. And Hinduism had to struggle most keenly for its very existence. It had to adopt fresh defensive measures many of which have been perpetuated up to the present day. A society protected by innumerable rules and restrictions cannot possibly have a natural growth. Out of sheer biological necessity the Hindu social system had to grow more and more exclusive, and various evils crept into it during those troublesome days. Indeed, as R.C. Dutt puts it, "the worst results of that system were unknown in India until after the Mahomedan conquest." It was during the Mahomedan rule again that Hinduism produced a number of reform movements which asserted the ancient ideals of universalism and brought about a new adjustment so very essential for the life and growth of Hindu society

## THE IDEALS OF THE CASTE SYSTEM

The true spirit of the Hindu social order has been universal. The fathers of the ancient Hindu civilisation, seers as they were, tried to found their social system on the eternal ideals of life. They fully recognised that under the impulse of the hard instinct implanted in him, the average man would create social distinctions based either on culture or wealth. They preferred the division on culture to that of wealth. They therefore placed before the Hindus a socio-religious system which aimed to make the members of the various Varnas or castes and Ashramas or stages of life pass through the injunctions of Dharma or duties and disciplines calculated to help them in rising in the scale of culture. One of the most striking points which differentiates Hindu society from other social systems is that in it the units are not individuals but social groups separated by different forms and customs, creeds and traditions. In the words of Sir B. N. Seal, "the ancient Indian polity which was evolved to suit a composite society was a polity based on Dharma, social duty and not on Adhikara or right. . . . It is this binding force of mutual duties and obligations (including duties to self, the *Atman* in every person or group), rather than the divisive and militant concept of rights, which must be the special message of the gospel of nationalism to a heterogeneous and composite society." The ideal of the caste system is to put an end to all distinctions, to lead the Sudra, Vaishya, Kshatriya and the Brahmin to the state of a real Brahmin who in the primary sense of the term is a "knower of Brahman," who sees the One in the many and rises above all distinctions of name and form that divide the members of one great human family.

## THE ASSIMILATIVE POWER OF THE CASTE SYSTEM

The modern critic of the caste system sees in it nothing but evils. If it is "all rotten" how has it been able to live a practically eternal life, instead of dying a natural death like many of the other ancient social orders?

The present caste system may appear to be completely fossilised. But it is only the superficial view. Even in its present degraded form it possesses an elasticity which is enabling new elements to settle down within its fold as its integral part, and rise in the scale of culture through the potent influence of its spiritual ideals and ethical practice. "The system of castes," says Sir George Campbell, "gives room for the introduction of any number of outsiders. So long as people do not interfere with the existing castes, they may form a new caste and call themselves Hindus." Fresh aboriginal and non-Aryan tribes and races inhabiting the hill tracts, outlying uplands and the uncleared jungles in India are being fast absorbed into Hinduism by a silent and effective method, and are coming to form part and parcel of the mighty Hindu society. But this process of conversion is a gradual one. It is not a mere formal but also a cultural transformation. And the main reason of the extension of the Hindu society has been this unending power of assimilation. Hinduism absorbed innumerable indigenous races and various foreign invaders belonging to manifold ethnic groups. It even spread its cultural kingdom over many peoples outside the bounds of India, and gladly admitted them into its social system of four castes. It has been very tolerant towards aliens who entered its fold and even attained to places of great honour in the social system. It has been even tolerant to a fault towards the militant and proselytising religions that have perverted and are still trying to pervert its followers. Why is it that in spite of its unique catholicity, Hinduism is so intolerant towards the so-called depressed classes, who claim to be Hindus in every sense of the term? There must be a deep meaning in this uncharitable attitude.

#### THE ORIGIN OF THE DEPRESSED CLASSES

The origin of the depressed classes is shrouded in mystery. There is no doubt that a few of the communities did never imbibe the Hindu culture and have always

remained outside the Aryan fold. But the origin of the others is to be sought in the popular theory of the intermixture of the four castes, that took place in an order prohibited by the Hindu social code. The children of all undesirable mixed marriages, it is said, were shunned by the orthodox society. And those who were excommunicated for transgressing the established laws of society also went to increase the number of these outcastes. This theory certainly holds good in some cases. But in the majority of instances the origin is different. Speaking of the untouchable communities of Bengal Mahamahopadhyaya Hara Prasad Shastri observes, "The so-called depressed classes with whom the Brahmins and their followers are not in the habit of keeping any intercourse, are really, most of them, the survivals of the once most powerful royal, nay, imperial race of Buddhists in Bengal." This is true of the other parts of the country also. During the great Hindu revival that followed the downfall of Buddhism in India, Hindu society, true to its ancient spirit of universalism, opened its hospitable doors to people of all classes, and assimilated many of the Buddhist communities including those who were originally followers of the Vedic religion as well as others who came at first within the pale of the Aryan culture only through Buddhism. Communities that readily came into the fold of Hinduism were gladly accepted and were given their respective rights and privileges. But there were many others that persistently refused to be absorbed into the mother church. Exclusiveness came to be practised on both sides. The Buddhist communities shunned Hindu society and Hindu society too shunned them. They became Anacharanyas or "untouchables" and suffered from many disabilities at the hands of the members of the dominant society. And as the result of complete isolation, oppression and loss of culture, these communities became disorganised and degenerated to a great extent. Many of them later on embraced Islam attracted by its democratic social system. Some others were forcibly

converted to Mahommedanism while those who remained true to their own faith and could not stand the silent influence of the Hindu religion adopted most of the manners and customs of Hindu society, and became Hindus both in form and spirit. But the brand of untouchability could not be removed. Some of the Vaishnavite reformers admitted a large number of the members of the depressed classes into them. But the attitude of the so-called orthodox Hindus has ever remained exclusive. Whatever may be the origin of the depressed classes, the present day Hindu society is guilty of a most heartless form of social tyranny which is to say the least against the true spirit of the Vedic religion.

#### THE SOLUTION OF CASTE PROBLEMS

The central theme of the caste system is culture. And this culture is to be imbibed not by highly clamouring for rights but by the scrupulous performance of duties. Invidious distinctions between the Brahmin and the non-Brahmin, between the high caste and the outcaste can be wiped off only by removing the differences in culture. The method is not to pull down the more cultured caste to the level of the less cultured one, as some of our reformers have vainly attempted to do, but to raise the lower to the cultural level of the higher, enabling all to appropriate the same culture. This is what the Hindu social system aims to achieve. "Our solution of the caste question," says Swami Vivekananda, "is not degrading those who are already high up, is not running amuck through food and drink, is not jumping out of our own limits in order to have enjoyment, but it comes by every one of us fulfilling the dictates of our Vedantic religion, by our attaining spirituality, and by our becoming the ideal Brahmins. There is a law laid on each one of you in this land by your ancestors, whether you are Aryans or non-Aryans, Rishis or Brahmins or the very lowest outcastes. The command is the same to you all, that you must make progress without stopping, and that, from the



highest man to the lowest Pariah, every one in this country has to try and become the ideal Brahmin." Then the ideal of the caste system is to raise mankind slowly and gently to the height of the perfect spiritual man who through the performance of "truthfulness, charity, forgiveness, good conduct, non-injury, penances and mercy," attains to the knowledge of the One Imperishable Self that is beyond all differentiations of caste or creed.

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## GOD WITHIN

*By Swami Atulananda*

### I

The other day looking at a book of selections from different scriptures, I came across a verse from the Psalms which reads thus: "He that planteth the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?"

I found this very beautiful and suggestive of a divine truth, for it is the Lord who dwells within us, who has created this wonderful and complicated instrument, body and mind, which together we call our person. From Him we have come forth, He created us and having created us He entered within us a ray of His very Being, "even to the very tips of the finger-nails, as a razor might be fitted in a razor case."

He entered as the essence of our existence. Centred in our hearts He is the power, the life-giving principle that puts the machine into action. He is the Driver of the machine and the Witness to all our deeds, the Soul of our existence, "Touching without hands, hasting without feet, He sees without eyes, He hears without ears. He knows what is to be known, but no one knows Him. They call Him the first, the mighty Purusha."

The driving power is always the same in all beings high or low, in animal, man or God, but the manifestation is according to the instrument. The electric current is the same in all dynamos, but it manifests according to the instrument into which it flows. It produces light, or heat, or power. But the original force is always the same,—electricity.

In man and all conscious beings the flow of God's power is Chinmaya or consciousness. It is consciousness that makes us living, acting beings; and it is Rupam, the instrument, body and mind—that distinguishes us from each other and from lower manifestations. That consciousness manifests in us as thought, will and desire. And that same consciousness in its pure original form is Chit, or the knowledge aspect of God, who is called Satchidananda,—Existence, Knowledge and Bliss in the Vedanta.

In and through this consciousness the entire universe has its existence. "Through the power of Brahman, the eternal, unchangeable Being, fire burns, the sun shines, the Devas perform their respective functions, Death stalks the earth."

Our real being then is Consciousness. This may act in the external world as in our waking condition, or in the internal world as in dream and sleep, or in the spiritual world as in Samadhi,—the super-conscious state of the Yogis. But the consciousness itself is always the real "I" in us. The person is awake, or sleeps, or dreams, or is in Samadhi, but the real "I" undergoes no change. "He is the Purusha, the Soul without action, tranquil, faultless, without stain, the highest bridge of immortality, steady like a fire in glowing embers."

According to the Advaita Vedanta God or Brahman is the only existence. "From Him all this sprang." So we read in the Svetashvatara Upanishad: "Thou art the woman, Thou art the man, Thou art the youth and the maiden, Thou art the man tottering on the staff, Thou art all in all in the universe. Thou art the blue-fly, and the green parrot and the red-eyed beast, Thou art the cloud that bears the lightning in its womb, the seasons and the sea Thou art, beginningless, the Infinite from whom all worlds are born."

But let us first consider God as the Consciousness,—the I principle in all beings. "In this city of Brahman (the body), there is a small lotus as a palace (the heart). Now what exists within the lotus, that is to be sought for, that is to be understood."

When the "I" consciousness departs from the body, the body dies and disintegrates. We are then disassociated from the gross body, but we continue to live in a fine, subtle body. And in that body of fine material we experience life in a different sphere of existence. This subtle body corresponds to its new surroundings and is adjusted to its new conditions. It is

a condition just as natural as our earth-life, for though everything is changed there is a harmonious relationship between the departed and his new surroundings as is the case here on earth.

Suppose we went to sleep and during our sleep the world were reduced to the size of a pea and suppose we and everything in this world and outside of it had shrunk in the same proportion. The relationship of all things would have remained the same, and when we awoke we would not notice any change. Everything would appear to us as before we went to sleep, because the proportions were preserved. It would certainly be a great change but we would not know anything about it. In this miniature world everything would go on as before without a hitch, without any one being aware of the change. Though everything else had undergone such a tremendous change, our consciousness would have remained unaffected. The "I" would not have changed in the least. The magic transformation of our body and surroundings would have left our consciousness unchanged.

Thus at the time of death everything will be different. But the change will be in proportion, everything will vibrate at a rate different from our earth-rate but in relationship to every thing else. We will find ourselves in a world of different vibration, which will be very much like our present world. "As here, so there," says the Upanishad.

Ordinarily, of course, our mental condition is affected by a change of our surroundings and external conditions. But here we must remember that the mind is part of the machine. A change in the mind does not affect the Witness, the real I, the creator of the mind. The real I, the God in man, never changes. Change takes place only in that which is external to the real I. But we are so mixed up with our external existence that we identify ourselves with it, forgetting our true nature. So we know ourselves only in this mixed up condition. This is called the state of bondage.

At present we are not free, we are not aware of our pure consciousness because we allow our surroundings to affect us. We are conscious of our surroundings and our own personality, we live an external life, a surface existence. So we think we are Mr. so and so. We forget that life here and hereafter means simply that the real I is experiencing this or that world,—we forget our real divine and blissful nature. The real I, the Soul of

our soul, the Atman, never changes, never moves. It is the omnipresent One shining in every heart.

Life is like a moving picture passing before the soul. Death is another picture. The Soul is even the Witness,—it neither comes nor goes. Those who have realised this, who have seen and experienced this, are called Jivan-muktas, free souls. They have become conscious of their true Self, the God within man. To them life is a moving picture witnessed from within. "He that planteth the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?" He, the real man, is not affected by this ever changing panorama of life.

For the man of realization there is no coming or going, no entering the body or departing from it. All these changes are in the personality, external to man's real being. Time and space are not in the soul, but in the mind. The free soul has risen beyond the thralldom of mind. "As all stars are set in the same infinite sky" says Swami Vivekananda, "so all souls have their root in one infinite consciousness, called God." In essence we are God. He is our divine nature, the eternal man manifesting through different personalities.

The steamer moves on the bosom of the river, and it seems as if the land is moving. So, nature, this infinite universe with its millions of worlds and spheres moves before the soul, now revealing one world, now another, now showing life, then again death, running off reel after reel of this eternally moving picture of life.

But within us is the witness who moves not. He looks on unaffected by the weal or woe pictured before Him. Time and space weave this grand panorama of the universe, and the Man within man looks on, knowing it to be a fiction, a mirage, Maya.

There are two classes of spectators at a drama. One class looks on and enjoys it all as a show. The other class is moved to tears or laughter, is wrought into a state of excitement, loves or hates as the play unfolds, almost forgetting that it is only a play. Or take a football match. How excited some of the spectators become, how really sorry and affected when the party they favour loses. But others simply enjoy the sight of the game, unmoved whether red comes out victorious or blue.

There are two classes of men in this world, the free and the bound,—those who look on, and those who identify them-

selves with the play of life. The first remain unmoved, calm and peaceful under all conditions. The others are swept along with the current of events, now happy, now miserable, now at peace and again greatly disturbed in mind. Those who know their true divine nature follow their course unaffected by the currents of fortune and misfortune. They steer straight ahead for the goal. They see that all life is a play. This realisation brings them strength and fortitude under all conditions. Even death they meet and witness with a calm mind, for they know that the Soul does not die. They know that for the Soul there is neither birth nor death. Life is one picture, death is another. It is only the subtle body that comes and goes. The Soul is always here and everywhere, one with the great Over-Soul, the omnipresent Spirit. Death causes no real separation. The Soul of the departed is with us always, in life as well as in death. Those who realise this, the Upanishads tell us, will never grieve.

If we should look constantly into an imperfect mirror, we would at last believe that the blemishes in the reflection belong to our person. So also seeing the external world we think that we are ordinary human beings. It is like an actor on the stage who for a moment so entirely identifies himself with his part that he forgets his real personality.

This we are doing life after life, always thinking that we are man or woman, forgetting that we are the Spirit. The Hindu scriptures say, "Know thy real Self, and knowing thy real Self thou shalt be free and happy." Realise that you are the Soul, the Consciousness within, and all suffering comes to an end.

"When with that realisation the mind is overpowered, then does one see no dreams. Then bliss arises in the person. As birds in the home tree nest, in just the selfsame way this all does nestle in the Self Supreme. Who, verily, knows the eternal one, in which the Self with all the powers, the lives and creatures nestle, He into all-knowing enters."

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## THE DOCTRINE OF EXPERIENCE AS THE ONE SELF

### V. THE PROBLEM OF METHOD IN THE VEDANTA

**T**He subject-matter of philosophy in the West has usually been either the familiar phenomena of experience in the world, external or internal, or both. Sometimes, however, an attempt is made to distinguish the coarse perceptions and experiences of common sense, from these same as sifted, corrected, and made precise and presented to us as such by an intelligent person trained in scientific methods. In either case, logical method is brought into use so as to bring either or both sets of phenomena under some one comprehensive law or principle of explanation.

Of such principles or methods we have several leading instances.

I. *The Empirical or Common sense Method.* According to this principle or method, the facts of experience are of two kinds,—either objects existing and perceived outside the mind, or thoughts, *i. e.*, ideas—*produced* within the mind and conceived as such, and not states inhering in the mind as primary data. The great difficulty of this theory with a certain class of thinkers is that often the perceptions are erroneous and at times do not at all correspond with the objects as they actually are outside. Hence the origin of Idealism, which denies altogether the existence of the outside world—Sankara holds neither the traditional dualistic realism, nor the representationism of Descartes according to which the mind either receives, like a photographic plate, representations of objects existing outside and thereby is enabled to perceive or know those objects as they are,—or receives from the objects such an influence as enables its own latent and innate dispositions or tendencies to project themselves outside so as to ascertain and determine the characteristics of those objects in whole or in part. Nor does Sankara turn, by any kind of enforced and inexorable reaction, to the extravagances of the Buddhist schools of idealism. He is a realist of the modern “critical” type. The mind’s thoughts are dependent upon—in fact they are copies or configurations more or less complete, of the objects which exist outside independently of our knowing them

and are not in any wise conditioned by their being known to us. Further, according to Sankara, knowledge is only a *particular* (or special) kind of relation existing between the object and its configuration, image or idea, in the mind. He says also:—"Till Brahman is realised, we agree that all objects (whether external or internal) are *real*,"—real in the sense that they exist apart from our knowledge of them or the aspects in which they are known. Otherwise men will not be differently affected by the same objects. Indeed, the date of perception are largely dependent upon the store of impressions (*vasanas*) produced and remaining hidden in the mind during the past life (and lives) of each person as symbolic, but also, active agencies which enable us to receive stimulation from objects outside and express ourselves in responsive perceptions of them. At the same time, Sankara holds that, in the very act of receiving a stimulation from outside, there is produced in the mind a sense of the actual existence of the outer reality. We may often err, but our erroneous perceptions may always be accounted for later on, and corrected in time.

II. *The Method of Intuition.* According to this method, the mind has, by nature certain individual and internal tendencies or dispositions which are the essential preliminary in all knowledge,—dispositions which must be carefully cultivated (or eschewed) in order that we may not become the slaves of the environment; and the external reality comes next as the object in knowledge. But in truth there is no such method in use known as Intuition by which we are enabled to sense these tendencies (*Vasanas*) in the individual. The tendencies are directly unknown except to the superconscious vision of the Yogi; and their existence is only inferrible from our direct knowledge of an individual's aims and activities in life. The Upanishads mention them as facts, and so we cannot properly hold them to be mere products of a theorist's imagination, or merely to be hypotheses invented to account for the manner in which men's experiences of the outer world and their activities in life get limited and restrained in the practice of daily life. Finally, not all our mental dispositions can be discovered by any processes of intuition or inference available to us,—and they remain, or may remain, entirely hidden during our entire allotted span of life here.

A new form of the Method of Intuition has been recently promulgated by Bergson and become famous and influential all over the world. According to him we know a thing in two

different ways:—"The first implies that we move round an object; the second that we enter into it." "The first kind of knowledge may be said to stop at the *relative*; the second, in those cases where it is possible, to attain the *absolute*." In the latter case, Bergson holds that our experience is not relative to any points of view or reference which we take up in regard to the object, or to any symbols by which it is translated or transformed and made to form part of our knowledge. As Bergson says, "I am inside the object itself." I no longer grasp the object "from without, remaining where I am, but where it is, from within, as it is in itself. I shall possess an absolute." "The absolute, which is the object, and not its representation, the original and not its translation, is perfect by being perfectly what it is." Bergson, also, ventures to say that "it is doubtless that the absolute has often been identified with the infinite." Then he goes on to say:—"It follows from this that an absolute could only be given in an *Intuition*, whilst every thing falls within the province of *analysis*. By *intuition* is meant the kind of intellectual sympathy by which one places himself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible. Analysis, on the contrary, is the operation which reduces the object to elements already known, that is to elements common both to it and other objects. . . . In its eternally unsatisfied desire to embrace the object around which it is compelled to turn, analysis multiplies without end the number of its points of view in order to complete its always incomplete representation, and ceaselessly varies its symbols that it may perfect the always incomplete translation. But intuition, if intuition is possible, is a simple act." According to Bergson, Intuition is the method of metaphysics and enables us "to possess a reality absolutely instead of knowing it relatively,"—and so "metaphysics is the science which claims to dispense with symbols." Finally, "there is one reality, at least, which we all seize from within, by intuition and not by simple analysis. It is our own personality in its flowing through time—our self which endures." Metaphysics transcends all fleeting and relative symbols, aspects, concepts, images, in order to reach the intuition which enables consciousness "to appear to itself as it really is, without any veil," *i.e.*, "to have a faithful image of the development of ourself in duration."—This so-called new method is nothing but a description of the process by which the Buddhist holds that we become aware of our consciousness as a complex whole of mental states or conditions—a whole forming a moving line or flux which,



while it cannot remain the same for any two successive moments presents at every *second* moment the memory of what it has inherited from its predecessor, and so, notwithstanding the continuous flux and ceaseless change which constitutes its duration leaves behind it the sense of personality,—of “our self which endures” (Bergson), of what the Buddhist calls “*ālaya-vijñāna*”, the store (or centre) of consciousness. All this teaching of Bergson regarding the method or process of Intuition is nothing more than the Buddhist philosophy known as *kṣhanika-vāda* or theory of continuous change. But why should it be called Intuition, or regarded as giving us a knowledge of a *metaphysical absolute*, as distinguished from a relative and enduring self, an ever-changing centre or store of conscious states happening in duration or time—of successive and differing concepts, ideas, or mental conditions arising out of a multiplicity of purely external points of view or aspects of objects outside, being taken into consideration? In our view, Bergson’s philosophy is not different from the method of Pragmatism, to which we next proceed. The *truly absolute* has always been understood in the sense of a *noumenal and static reality* independent of all changes and advances made in the sphere of the phenomenal world of time and space

III. *The Method of Pragmatism*. This method has of late gained a wide acceptance in the West, chiefly owing to the spread of several of the leading conceptions of Buddhism in the West, though its leading representatives claim that its main features and tendencies originated chiefly in America. Its central conception—and no one can be blind to its truth—is that no theory or conception of reality can have meaning or value for the world except through the experiences of living and sentient beings inhabiting the world of phenomena—experiences which are the consequences of activities in some locality or habitation in it. But how can we, with our limited understandings, know all these consequences or be able to interpret them in their true bearings? *Secondly*, there are experiences which at first seem real, but fail us later on, though such visions or appearances do not fail to bring their own consequences with them. *Thirdly*, no pragmatist,—according to the late Professor James, till lately the leading exponent of Pragmatism—can warrant the “objective truth” of any phenomenon taking place in the universe. He says:—“The Pragmatist, whenever he says reality, means in the first sense what he *believes* at the moment to be such. . . . Each reality verifies and validates its

own *idea* exclusively." Thus the Pragmatist stands self-condemned. Sankara is the very antipodes of the Pragmatist, and proclaims the *objective*—though not the *absolute*—truth of our experiences in the world of phenomena. Finally, the Pragmatist holds that "reality is ever in the making," and so nothing remains unchanged even for two successive seconds. In fact nothing ever exists,—a position manifestly absurd. For, as Sankara says, we have "the knowledge that this thing is the same as that seen before,"—what he calls *tad-idam-buddhi*. He goes on to say that "in the case of such knowledge, it is not reasonable to hold that they refer to different objects". Nor is it right, as Sankara says in the same context, to account for such knowledge of *sameness* by mere *similarity* (*sadrisya*). For, "where there are not *different* objects, it is not reasonable to assert the knowledge of *similarity*." (*Vide* Bhashya on Brihadaranyaka—Upd).

IV. *The Theory of Phenomenal Idealism.* The Idealist, whether of the Buddhist or the Berkeleyan type seeks the source of reality in the mind and finds it there in the "*idea*." The world without is to him either a fiction or a mere projection of its contents by the mind into an imaginary outer world whirling about in an imaginary space beyond. We do not propose to criticise this method at length at this stage. We shall only point out that the self-conscious ego knows himself, and can know himself, only as contrasted with the outer world of practical life. As Lord Balfour remarks:—"Each is necessary to the other; in the absence of the other neither has any significance." To the Vedantin, *prakriti* (primordial matter) is *anadi* (beginningless) quite as much as the living self-conscious personality or thinker (*jiva*). Hence, neither matter nor the living personality can be made to account for the other.

Another school of Idealism has recently appeared in Italy. Though founded on Hegelianism, it has undergone a transformation. This new school of philosophy as promulgated by Benedetto Croce and his followers is now gaining some prominence in Europe. Hegel held that, while we must interpret the whole of reality in terms of thought, "behind the immediate thought or experience of which we are aware, transcending it and yet immanent in it, there is a total concrete unity of thought in terms of which alone individual experience becomes intelligible and through participation in which it is real." In Great Britain, there arose a new school which combined the Hegelian with the Vedantic point of view and of which Bradley

and Bosanquet form the leading representatives. They hold that there is an immutable and absolute reality—which is at the same time a totality of thought—creative of, and constituting, the completed universe, a universe which is all that is and never more than that all, but at the same time ever new in its constant and continuous manifestation of itself in the finite world of phenomena. The new Italian school founded by Croce criticises the “reality” of the modern English school of Idealists as a static absolute—*first*, on the ground that it cannot progress in time. *Secondly*, thought is an activity, and therefore implies change and development and cannot therefore be also an absolute unity such as the new English school conceives the reality behind the manifested universe to be. Hence, according to the Italian school, reality is an *activity of thought which is self-creative and self-interpretative* and which, while it is an immediate realisation or experience, is also changing and multiplex. As a recent writer of this school, Signor Leone Vivante, says, “Each act, each thought, gathers up within itself everything of value in every time and place so as to present itself as a focus transient in duration, but in infinite relation to the living experience of the individual, and without any limiting relation to any real or permanent entity,” whether God, Cause or the Absolute, which are all at best illusions of the fancy, “a pure imagining” as compared with the new conception of Reality as “an activity of thought in actuation.” Reality is thus conceived as a perpetual course or stream of actively changing and advancing thought, never losing what has been truly gained, but never attaining to the status of a unity or complete whole,—*ever progressing*, however, towards a solution or a fulfilment, though never reached, of whatever is received as *ideally* true and good. This new Italian Idealism, it will be seen, is not in practice very different from the method of Pragmatism, though it sails under a different banner.

We shall now finally consider the significance of Method in the Vedānta. We have already explained (*vide* Introductory, I) how the Veda alone is the source of the doctrine of Experience as the One Self, and—by implication as well as by our actual study of it—of the true doctrine concerning all connected topics. This fact, when understood in its true significance, established for us, as a necessary conclusion, that Isvara, from whom the Veda springs along with the rest of the universe at the time of creation, is (and must be) omniscient (*sarvajña*). For, he is the Intelligence, Witness, (*Chaitanya*)

or *Sakshi*) which makes all the objects of the phenomenal universe shine for us. He is, indeed, neither a merely efficient cause (*nimitta-karana*), like a potter of the pottery to which he gives form,—nor merely the material cause (*upadana-karana*), like the clay in the potter's hands. Whenever we speak of Isvara as being actuated by desire (*iccha*) as the *hetu* (impelling or motive force) when he creates (*i. e.*, evolves or manifests) the world out of the primordial matter; the intention here is only to offer an analogy which would carry a conviction of some kind to begin with to ordinary persons who do not possess the insight or intelligent comprehension which will enable them at once to catch or reach the sublime conception of the Vedanta. In truth, only the Jiva's Karmic Vasanas latent in the mind make the inactive *maya* rise into activity (*vijrimbhana*) at the time of creation. *Maya* is the potency (*sakti*) which according to the Veda, is to be *conceived* or understood (*kalpita*) as the seed of the universe,—a potency which is superposed on the Atman and brought into activity so that the universe may rise into manifestation and have its progressive evolution in space and time. The noumenal and undifferentenced Atman, being "one only without a second," cannot be said to *have* any *saktis* or potencies which are calculated to bring it into relations of any kind with any other form of existence. Such a *sakti* is ascribed to, or superposed upon, the Atman,—and so the Atman *conceived* as possessing it,—even as the mother-of-pearl is *conceived* to have in it the power, potency or quality needed to appear as silver to people who see it as such from a distance. Similarly, Brahman is to be *conceived* as having inherent in itself the potency (of *maya*) needed for the emanation or evolution of the universe,—and it is the seed also of his *knowledge* of the entire course of the universe, irrespective of time and place. Thus Isvara's Omniscience (*Sarvajnatvam*) means also what is known as *Sarvarthaprakasakatvam*,—the power of manifesting the entire universe of phenomena (including the Vedas) through his power of intelligent self-effulgence and self-expression. It does not mean either that, like human authors, he composed the Vedas after gaining a knowledge of all objects in the universe, nor that he recited all the Vedas, like a modern or mediaeval Mahopadhyaya (great teacher) to his disciples. But we cannot pursue this topic here into all its details.

As the Vedas thus form the source of all our knowledge of the entire universe of phenomena past present and future—the Vedas being infinite in number and therefore not confined

to those now extant—and as they are also the source of our knowledge of Brahman (as already shown), we have no need to prove the truth of any of its declarations by any of the ordinary methods or standards of proof employed by worldly men. What, then, is our method for establishing the Vedic doctrine of Experience as the One Self? Our method is ordinarily known as *Samanvaya* i. e., synthesis. We only try to arrive at a logical synthesis of the words and sentences of the Upanishads of the Vedas so as to establish or construct a consistent system of doctrine which is their *true purport* (*Tatparya*). Such a synthesis can be arrived at by a rational consideration, with a constructive aim and purpose of the six indications (*lingas*) which are needed for the interpretation of any passage or context of the Veda and are usually available and discoverable. These six *tatparya-lingas* (indications of the true import of a context) are usually enumerated as follows:—(1) *Upakrama* (introductory statement); (2) *Upasamhara* (concluding statement); (3) *Abhyasa* (repetition, frequent mention); (4) *Apurvata* (novelty,—i. e., a view not expressed elsewhere and so known here for the first time); (5) *Phala* (a result, utility, or value); (6) *Upapatti* (the offering of a rational explanation or convincing analogy). All these or most of these, *can be found* in every Upanishad as a whole, or even any part of the same dealing with any important topic of the Vedanta doctrine. Writers on the Vedanta and teachers of each system of doctrine have, when challenged, often had to put them forth clearly and at length in order to carry conviction to those who have an open mind and especially to the disciples resorting to them for instruction and enlightenment. It is easy to give examples. Let us, as an illustration, take the famous 6th Adhyaya of the Chandogya-Upd. We shall give the six *lingas* in the order above given:—(1) “This Sat only, friend, existed before creation”. II—1 (*Upakrama*); (2) “All this (universe) is a transformation of this Self. That is reality, that is the Self, that thou art”. VIII—7 (*Upasamhara*); (3) “Tattvam-asi” is repeated nine times—(*Abhyasa*); (4) The one reality,—*vis.*, the Atman—cannot be known from any source of knowledge (*Pramana*) except one of the Upanishads—and especially the Maha-Vakyas—(*Apurvata*); (5) *Upapatti*—Arguments and analogies abound everywhere in the Upanishads and sustain every part of the Vedanta Doctrine of Experience as the One Self; (6) *Phala*—What this consists in, and what it is not, has been explained in the previous section (Article No. IV). —“The knower of the Atman passes beyond grief.”

(Chandogya Upanishad, VII 1, 3). This shows that the goal of our enquiry is nothing which can be gained by an effort of ours in the world of phenomena,—i. e., not a *sadhya*—but the ever-existing (*siddha*) noumenal Reality in the sense already frequently referred to *viz.*, the “One only without a second” (*ekam-eva-advitīyam*). Thus we see the logical synthesis (*Samanvaya*) of the passages forming an Upanishad is alone our method of establishing the Vedantic doctrine of Experience as the One Self, or even of any portion thereof as contained in any particular passage or context of an Upanishad.

## NORMAL AND ABNORMAL MYSTICISM

By K. N. Kasturi, M. A.

It is of very happy augury that the world is now gradually coming to regard experience as a surer test of validity than tradition or inspiration. This shifting of centre from mere authority to direct perception now runs through all the pursuits of the human spirit and religion has been profoundly affected by it. We are coming to place greater trust in the testimony of the soul, the experience of the immediate awareness of God. This explains the large volume of literature published in England and other war-weary countries, which have recently realised the emptiness of old formulæ, about the lives and teachings of those strange personalities who are at once the wonder and despair of their contemporaries,—the glorious brotherhood of mystics.

Broadly speaking, there are two schools among these students and interpreters of mysticism, one emphasising that it is “a fitly proportioned completeness,” “the realisation of human personality” “a direct communion wholly rational and practical” and the other, armed with abundant psychological data, pronouncing it as “out of the course of the human mind’s normal action,” a pathological perversity, a manifestation of hysteria.

Every form of human experience is capable of being exaggerated to an undesirable, abnormal level. There are always among all peoples certain psychopathic persons with unstable nervous systems in whom the suggestions of social environment or of new ideas ‘in the air’ will work with abominable coerciveness. And it is difficult to distinguish, in the

spiritual realm as elsewhere, the phenomena of the frontier regions. Psychologists find the mystic "obsessed" with the idea of the Living Presence of God, having a 'trance' or experiencing an inroad into his normal consciousness. He has extraordinary *oblivions* and remembrances, capable of quick explanation in terms of 'repression' and 'complexes.' Of course, recent studies of hypnotism and hysteria have revealed a vast area of our being where the subtle power of suggestion is undisputed. And in the long role of mystics who have influenced opinion and created solvents, there have also been men and women who were distinctly hyper-sensitive to psychical disturbances. As early as 1908, therefore, Professor Coe in an article published in the Hibbert Journal on the sources of mystical revelation contended that such experiences are only cases of auto-suggestion.

But it is important to remind ourselves, in this connection, that 'auto-suggestion' is, after all, only a word, a convenient symbol for some process which yet remains the mystic's incommunicable monopoly. We have not solved the fundamental mystery of falling apples and stars moving in unison when Newton named it Gravitation, nor have we eliminated a Divine purpose when we coined the clinching word 'evolution'. Is not the word auto-suggestion only another form of saying that somewhere in the depths of man's inner being, there is a Divine fountain-head, an enlarging and expanding power, a spiritual dynamo, from which these suggestions come up to human consciousness? The Taittiriya Upanishad says, "Let him worship Brahman as support and he becomes supported. Let him worship Brahman as greatness and he becomes great. Let him worship Brahman as mind and he becomes endowed with mind. And let him worship Brahman as Brahman and he will become possessed of Brahman." May not the doctrine of auto-suggestion be true of a mystic only in so far as these words indicate,—that we become whatever we worship, through a process of unfoldment from within?

Turning now to the life and teachings of *real* mystics—not the unspiritual adventurers seeking for short cuts and display of attainments—we find that their subjective experiences have always resulted in an expansion of constructive energy,—a more harmonious and complete development of personality. The mystic "feels" "lives" and "experiences"; he is blessed with that "perfect disenthralment which is God." Dr. Bosanquet writes, "In the purity of love and will with the supreme good, you are not only 'saved' but you are 'free' and 'strong.'"

This positive and living sense of expansion and joy can come only if the higher levels of human consciousness come in intimate contact with something Divine and recognise the glory of the Infinite. Whatever be the languages in which the mystics of the world have spoken, their message has ever been the same life-giving one. They have been the champions of the eager awakened soul against rigid formalism and oppressive custom. Their voice has lent courage to stooping hearts, to caged souls beating vainly against the bars of text and tradition. In the words of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, "As the little drop poured into a large measure of wine seems to lose its own nature entirely and to take on both the colour and the taste of the wine or, as iron heated red hot loses its own appearance and glows like fire or, as air filled with sunlight is transformed into the same brightness so that it doesn't so much appear to be illuminated as to be itself light, so must all human feeling towards the Holy One be self-dissolved in unspeakable wise and wholly transferred into the will of God. For, how shall God be all in all if anything of man remains in man? The substance will indeed remain but in another form, another glory, another power." Another glory, another power—these do come only by man's transcending his individuality and dwelling in the larger realm of Divine Consciousness in which the personal self is hosed. Hence it is that the mystics have been the supreme, though secret, springs of inspiration for the mightiest spiritual movements among men. They have saved man at many a disastrous crisis in his career by their emphasis on the possibility of a direct perception of God within.

Mysticism is thus not an incursion from beyond ourselves. It is but the last stage in the normal process of the fulfilment of the human personality—harmonious development of ourselves—achieved by a few but yet within the reach of all. And there is no denying the fact that everyone is privileged to get glimpses of the mystic vision, even amidst the whirlpools of everyday existence. A consciousness of some inexplicable and unanalysable personal relationship with the Divine comes to many of us at certain great moments of life, when poised above the waves of circumstance, we are compelled to obey a higher call from our moral being. As Dr. Rufus Jones says, "There is a mystical aspect in our highest moral moments. We never rise to any high level of moral action without feeling that the 'call' of duty comes from beyond our isolated self." The highest art, nay, the greatest inventions have all been the result of an overpowering of the consciousness by some symphony



of song or colour, some intuitional picture of Reality, when as Coleridge says, "A bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast, And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again" Prayer, again, as an ecstatic indentification or joyous fellowship is justified by its mystical essence and what is faith but the grasp of a hand held out from the Infinite, the conviction that there is 'an inner, unseen, spiritual universe'? These various experiences, well within the scope of normal human life, indicate that mysticism is nothing unnatural, deadening or esoteric.

According to Dr. Pringle-Pattison, in *Mysticism*, "the appeal is still to the individual, who, if not by reason then by some higher faculty claims to realise absolute truth and to taste absolute blessedness." And, so long as man continues to realise the finiteness and relativity of the objective world, he will persistently seek, in the path of the mystics, for that completeness of his being which alone can satisfy his sincerest cravings. Philosophy, impatient of its task, may dismiss the inarticulate experiences of the mystics as beyond its pale. Psychology, divorced from the deepest realities, may relate them to the laboratories of pathology or label them with names big enough to cast shadows under which its ignorance can take cover. But for all those who believe that man is fundamentally a spiritual being, mysticism will always be the consummation of his earthly endeavour, for it is religion 'in its most acute intense and living stage.'

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### INTERCOURSE BETWEEN INDIA AND CHINA

Ancient India had an intimate commercial relation with both the East and the West. And besides being engaged in material commerce, she was also carrying on vigorously a commerce of the soul with the outside world, particularly with the Eastern countries. Even before the birth of Buddha, Indian religion and culture flowed to Greater India which included Siam, Cambodia, Champa, Java, Bali and other countries and islands of the East. And during the ascendancy of Buddhism, India came to be recognised as the greatest spiritual teacher in the world.

India's spiritual relation with China was very close since the early days. In a short but informing article on "India and China," contributed to the *Modern Review* for January, Dr. Pro-bodh Chandra Bagchi writes—"It is not a mere accident that China is still known to the outside world by a name which India gave her for the first time (*China* sanskrit Cina) and the Chinese

nobility (*Mandarin-Mantrin*). Though these two great countries of Asia have lost since last few hundred years all consciousness of their former relations, the archives of the historian still cherish the reminiscences of a glorious past, still in the solitary corners of the far eastern countries the monasteries zealously guard the sacred memories of India." Indeed the time has come when we should recover this forgotten chapter of our glorious history from oblivion, and try to re-establish our spiritual fellowship with our great neighbours the Chinese who are trying their best to regain their national and cultural soul like ourselves.

China was known to the Indians even in very ancient days. As Dr. Bagachi tells us, "commercial relation was already existing between India and China in the 2nd century before Christ by some land route which connected South-Western China and India." And later on this commercial relation became more regular than before, and Indian sailors followed the coast line to reach the land of the Chinese. "Already used to call the Chinese *cina*," adds the writer, "the Indian navigators continued to call them by the same name. The Chinese however had no difficulty to recognise themselves under the historical name."

There are differences of opinion as to the date of the introduction of Buddhism in China. But still most of the authorities seem to be at one on the point that it took place before the beginning of the Christian era. According to one tradition the date is 121 B. C. Another tradition says that the first arrival of Buddhism was in the year 68 A. D. "None of these traditions however," concludes Dr. Bagchi, "is trustworthy. . . . It was towards the close of the 1st century B. C. (2 B. C.) that the first Buddhist text was brought by a Chinese ambassador (Tsiang King) from the Indo-Scythian Court. Besides, in the middle of the first century B. C. we hear of the existence of monks and laymen in the court of a prince of the imperial family ruling in the valley of Yoang tse Kiang. Two Indian monks, Kasyapa Matanga and Dharmaratna were the first to go to China and to translate Buddhist texts some of which are still preserved in Chinese. And for these two early Indian monks there was built the first Buddhist monastery called Po-ma-sse, "the white horse monastery," which played a great part in the history of Buddhism in China."

#### POLITICS AND RELIGION

One of the greatest dangers to our modern Indian life is the mixing up of popular religion with what may be called popular politics. The unscrupulous political agitator is trying to exploit the religious sense of the people for furthering his own selfish end.

By calling up the worst passions in the masses, and this in the holy name of religion, he is tending to spread a form of rabid communalism that is doing great havoc in the country. The fanatical religious preacher again is appealing to the herd-instinct of the masses, and is breeding a spirit of hatred and exclusiveness that threatens to divide the Indian people into a number of communities ever ready to encroach upon one another's right. India has her own social divisions which were originally founded on culture but are now based only on the accident of birth. Besides there has come into existence a new kind of "caste" distinction based on wealth, and this is likely to cleave society into the two conflicting camps of labour and capital as in the West. And to make matters worse the Western form of party cliques also have been imported into the land.

All this has tended to divide the country into a number of warring communities, the majority of which have forgotten the ideals of higher religion and also higher politics, and are doing incalculable harm to both. In his presidential address to the forty-first Indian National Congress, held at Gauhati, Mr. S. Srinivasa Aiyangar clearly pointed out this great danger to the Indian collective life when he said, "The intrusion into politics of religion, and very often of dogmatic religion, must be resisted as a primitive or mediaeval idea, born of theocracies and disastrous alike to religion and to politics." This does not, however, mean that true morality and spirituality are to be ruthlessly sacrificed at the altar of political expediency. On the other hand, they are to be carefully cultured so that they may exert a chastening influence on political life. Mr. Aiyangar rightly adds, "Hinduism and Islam will gain immeasurably in strength and purity if they are not mixed up with secular politics. I do not speak of morality or of that spiritual quality which is common to all great religions; for thereby politics and organisations are cleansed and made sweet and wholesome."

The spirit of religion is to be kept unsullied at any cost. It should not be allowed to identify itself with the temporal powers that be, and thus ultimately to degenerate into a mere handmaid of politics. Indeed the real strength of religion lies not in the support of things secular, but in the infinite grace of God and in the abiding faith of the devotee who prizes it above everything else in the world. "Let us not forget in the fever of political controversy," very happily does Mr. Aiyangar observe, "that the strength of each religion is derived from God and rooted in the souls of Prahlads. Not all the tortures of a Torquemada, nor

all the burning at the stakes, nor all the forms of persecution have been able to destroy the mystic quality of the human soul. Neither Hinduism nor Islam derives or requires strength either from the present or from any future government. Both stand, far, far above Swaraj which is not comparable to them. Neither foreign governments nor self-governments, neither democracies nor autocracies, can destroy the seed of faith which is in every one of us, that inspired interpretation of the universe to which one clings for guidance and solace in this world and for salvation in the next."

#### THE LATE SWAMI SHRADDHANANDA

The country has sustained an irreparable loss at the brutal murder of Swami Shraddhananda—the great Arya Samaj leader. The dastardly crime was committed by a Mussalman fanatic at Delhi on the 23rd December last under most tragic circumstances. The assailant sought an interview with the Swami on the plea of discussing some problems of Islam with him. The Swami, who was of late seriously ill, expressed his regret to comply with the request as he was too weak to do so. The murderer then said that he was thirsty and was given water which he took. But evidently he wanted blood to quench his thirst, and fired at the Swami four times, killing him on the spot.

The assassin is reported to have declared that he hoped to go to heaven by killing one whom he looked upon as an enemy of Islam. Whether heaven or hell is the proper reward for the diabolical murder of an old monk in his sick bed may be decided by Mussalman theologians. But whatever it is, there is no doubt that in the passing away of the great Swami the Indian people in general and Hindus in particular have lost a dynamic personality who was working with unique devotion and enthusiasm for the regeneration of his country and religion.

The Swami was an ardent believer in Hindu-Moslem unity. But he held at the same time that this unity could be established not on any make-believe and iniquitous pact or compromise, but on the recognition of the equal rights of the different communities, to spread their respective faiths by all moral and peaceful means. He was one of the most prominent figures in the Hindu Sangathan (organisation) movement, and always upheld the cause of the depressed and the downtrodden. We had the pleasure of meeting the Swami last at the Hindu Mahasabha held in Bombay in December, 1925, when he boldly declared that the upper cast:

Hindus must recognise the so-called untouchables as their own brethren, and it was only then that Sangathan could be said to have been organised properly.

The Swami was a bold educationist who made one of the most remarkable educational experiments of modern times in establishing the Gurukula Vidyalyaya—an institution for educating Hindu boys according to the ancient ideals of Aryan India.

There was a time when Swami Shraddhananda was very popular with Mohemmedans, and was given the special privilege of delivering a sermon from the pulpit of the famous Juma Musjid at Delhi. But of late he seemed to have incurred the displeasure of the majority of Mussalmans by his fearless advocacy of the social and religious rights of the Hindus. But still many well-known Mohammedan leaders were among his personal friends. Even during his last illness he was under the treatment of Dr. Ansari a patriotic Mohammedan doctor of all-India fame.

Swami Shraddhananda was an intrepid Sannyasi who never hesitated to give up his life for the sake of Truth. Recently he remarked at Agra that he would meet his death at the hands of some Mussalman fanatic. But still he was indifferent to his life, and himself admitted the assassin who murdered him in cold blood. The murderer alone may be responsible for the crime. But there is no doubt that such a dastardly act would not have been possible, had not reckless propagandists created an atmosphere for it by their inflammatory speeches and writings. This is a point which should draw the attention of the leaders of both the Hindu and Mohammedan communities.

We offer our heart's Shraddha to the memory of the great Swami. He was indeed a glorious example of fearlessness as he proved not only by his life but also by his death. May his soul rest in peace! And may his ideal of strength and manliness inspire the entire Hindu community, and make it active and dynamic as he wanted it to be!

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## NEWS AND REPORTS.

### SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, BOMBAY

The installation ceremony in the newly built shrine of the Ramakrishna Ashrama at Khar took place on the 26th December last amidst scenes of great rejoicing. The Ashrama was crowded with devotees and visitors since early morning. Srimat Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj, President of the Ramakrishna Mission, who came to Bombay from Madras accompanied by Swami Yatiswarananda, himself carried the picture of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna to the shrine on the first floor, and performed Puja and Aratrikam. During the Puja, Bhajan parties were singing devotional songs with great fervour. Special Puja and Homa were also performed by Swami Sharvananda with due rites and ceremonies befitting the occasion.

In the evening also a large number of the friends and admirers of the Mission assembled in the Ashrama Hall, and enjoyed Bhajan and musical entertainments. Gujratis and Deccanese, Bengalees, Madrasis and Parsis all took part in the celebration, and assembled to worship the great prophet of Dakshineswar whose spiritual empire is extending everyday. The functions came to a close with the distribution of Prasad. The expenses for constructing the Ashrama was partly met by a loan from the Development Department of the Government of Bombay. A generous Parsi devotee, who wants to remain unnamed and has been helping the Ashrama very liberally ever since the building work was begun, recently donated the munificent sum of Rs 11,500 to free the Ashrama completely from the liability. This added greatly to the joy which marked the whole celebration. May the Lord bless the kind donor whose name will ever remain associated with the history of the Ramakrishna Ashrama in Bombay!

### SWAMI SHARVANANDA IN BOMBAY

Srimat Swami Sharvanandaji arrived in Bombay from Mysore on the 2nd October last. He delivered a series of lectures in the Marwadi Vidyalaya Hall, and was highly appreciated by the Bombay public. During his sojourn in Bombay, he twice visited the historic City of Poona, and spoke to large and appreciative audiences. His second visit during the week of December last created a great enthusiasm among the student com-

munity. The students of the Fergusson College, Deccan College and Medical College invited the Swami to their respective institutions, and evinced a sincere interest in the ideas and ideals of the Ramakrishna Mission. A committee has already been formed in Poona with the object of starting an Ashrama there in the near future.

#### SWAMI YATISWARANANDA AT CUDDAPAH

On his way to Madras from Bombay Swami Yatiswarananda halted for about two days at Cuddapah. He formally opened at 8 a. m. on Saturday the 8th instant, the spacious hall of the local Ramakrishna Samaj, rebuilt by a great Mussalman devotee, Khan Bahadur Syed Abdul Majid, better known as Manju Meah Saheb Bahadur, and also delivered there the same evening a public lecture on the Message of Sri Ramakrishna. Next morning he held a conversazione on practical spiritual life and spoke on the Eternal Truths of Religion in the evening. The meetings were attended by the elite of the town who evinced great interest. The Swami gave also a short discourse on the ideals of the students' life at the Municipal High School on Monday morning, and returned the same night to Madras.

#### AN INTERESTING LETTER FROM OUR BURMA FLOOD RELIEF CAMP

The Ramakrishna Mission conducted relief work for the last seven months in the flood-affected areas in the district of Akyah, Arakan, Burma. Besides new cloths, blankets, banians and materials for building huts, about 350 maunds of rice were distributed every week in the month of December. This labour of love and personal contact with the Mission workers have left a great impression on the minds of the people there. We would like to share with our readers the following interesting letter from the swami in charge, which speaks for itself:

"Our place is some six or seven days voyage by sea from Rangoon. It is a mountainous country and is inhabited by the Mugs. These hill people because of their savagery are objects of dread not only to the local Hindus and Mussalmans, but also to the Government. They put on only a loin cloth and know very little of what we call civilisation. They are said to be ferocious like tigers and are ever ready to take one's life at the slightest provocation. But strange to say that through the grace of the Lord these terrible Mugs have come to possess great love and re-

gard for us. Hundreds of them, both young and old are ever ready to do our bidding. The Hindus and Mohammedans of the locality are marvelling at this remarkable change brought about in these people who were never seen to bear so much of love and good will towards strangers. The Mugs are Buddhists by religion. And each one of their villages has its own temples and monks.

We are struck to see a very unique feature in these people. True, they may not hesitate to kill another for a trifling cause, still they possess tremendous love and faith for their religion. From the little child of four to the old man of eighty, every one of them, men and women, go to the temple for worship. Such a thing is rarely to be seen elsewhere. And they also treat their monks with great honour. In fact they do not care for anything in the world save their temples and their monks.

Last November grand celebrations were held in all their temples on the full-moon day. Many of those people came from far and near to invite me to their temples. I had not much time at my disposal and could visit only three temples. The people were so happy, and received me with the greatest possible honour. I too felt very glad to see the blessed form of Lord Buddha which they beautifully decorated and to hear their recitations, prayers and sermons. Prasad also was distributed. Thousands of men and women took part in these celebrations.

On the way to one of these temples some eight to nine hundred people came to meet me, and took me to the temple in a procession accompanied by music. At first I objected to this form of honour. But I had to be silent when I was told that that was way in which they would receive monks greatly revered by them, and that they look upon it as part of their Dharma.

We have come to know many Buddhist monks. Some of them are very good. They all admire the devotion with which we look upon Lord Buddha. In fact they regard me as a monastic follower of Lord Buddha. Many Buddhist monks come to see me and invite me to their places. But I have little time to go out.

Some time back we decorated the picture of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and Hanuman, one day, and sang Ramanama Kirtan. More than five hundred Mugs came, and they were very glad to hear the music and partake of the Prasad. Before we came to this part of Burma, even Government Officials told us that we would be robbed and cut to pieces by the terrible people. But strange to say, the Mugs have come to look upon us



as their own. Indeed, none could even dream of what has actually taken place. People are astonished to see it. We too are marvelling to witness the glory of the Lord."

**SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENT'S HOME, MYLAPORE.**

The Annual Report for 1926 made its appearance as usual punctually on the 1st January. It is a record of invaluable service rendered to the cause of education in this country.

The number of boarders both at the beginning and end of this year was 122, and of them 21 were studying in Arts Colleges, 4 in Professional Colleges, 79 in the Residential High School and 20 in the Industrial Schools.

The internal management is mostly in the hands of the boys themselves. The guiding principle in the matter of training is to make the boys feel that it is their own home and that its ideals could be realised only through their loving service and co-operation. Moral and religious instruction forms an essential part of the training. Swami Saswatanandaji, the warden, was conducting the daily classes for the senior students and Swami Yatiswaranandaji the President was giving the weekly discourses. Separate religious classes were held for the junior students. Classes in devotional music and Bhajana were also held twice a week.

Sufficient attention was paid to the physical exercise of the boys. Drill, games, garden work, excursions and various kinds of physical activities occupied a rightful place in the daily life of the boys.

Regarding the Residential High School, the following extract from the last inspection report of the District Educational Officer, Madras, will be read with interest: "the great advantage obtained from a Residential High School is realised in this institution; for the boys not only get teaching during the usual school hours but obtain aid from the teachers who live with them throughout the mornings and evenings. It is interesting to note that so much time devoted to manual training and that the literary education given is in no way adversely affected. In other words it might almost be asserted that because of the attention paid to manual training, the boys are better fitted to undertake their literary studies. At any rate there is no ignoring the fact that out of 17 boys sent up for public examination last year 16 were placed in the eligible list.

It is doubtful whether there is another school in Madras where boys have such splendid opportunities to study. The open area, the spacious rooms, the cleanliness and comfort of their surround-

ings and the kindly influence that pervades the place all help in developing the noblest tendencies in pupils. The management have the highest welfare of all at heart and are to be congratulated on the efficient way in which the work of the institution is performed."

Besides the manual training section, there is a separate Industrial School attached to the High School. The machanical Engineering workshop was extended during the year at a cost of Rs. 4,,326.

With regard to the financial side, the receipts by subscriptions, donations, interest on deposits, Government grant and other sources amounted to Rs. 45,607-13-7 and the expenditure to Rs. 45,294-6-1, the excess of receipts over expenditure being Rs. 313-6-2.

The expenditure on the boarding of the boys was Rs. 21,009-14-6, giving in average of Rs. 14-5-7 per head per mensem. Rs. 37,216-13-6 were added to the Endowments, raising the total to Rs. 1,64,617-14-9. Mr. Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyar, a generous supporter of the Home, created an endowment named "Sri Ramaswami Aiyangar Industrial Endowment" in honour of the life work of the Secretary and Chief Organiser of the institution, M. R. Ry. Rao Sahib C. Ramaswami Aiyangar. M. R. Ry. Dewan Bahadur C. V. Viswanatha Sastriar, another devoted friend of the Home, has assigned to it his life insurance policy for Rs. 10,000.

The development of the Industrial Section and the strengthening of the Permanent Endowment Fund to place the Home on a stable basis are the foremost needs of the institution. Encouraged by the help rendered in the past, the management appeal to the public to assist them liberally in fulfilling these objects, and they feel confident that their appeal will meet with an adequate response from the generous public.

#### SRI RAMAKRISHNA NATIONAL GIRL'S SCHOOL

##### *(An Appeal)*

The Ramakrishna National Girls' School located at Krishnappa Naicken Agraharam, Peddunaickenpet, Georgetown, Madras, was established about twenty years ago and was under the management of a local body until the year 1921 when it was handed over to the Ramakrishna Mission owing chiefly to financial difficulties.

The object of the Mission in taking over the charge of the school was to develop it into a model institution with the help of the philanthropic public. Besides imparting sound secular

education on national lines, the Mission wanted to provide and actually did provide for non-sectarian religious education in order to instil the spiritual ideals of Indian womanhood into the tender minds of the future mothers of the Hindu race. For the last five years the Mission has been endeavouring to find proper ways and means to realise its object, and has been looking up for the necessary financial support from the generous public, but unfortunately with very little success. There is indeed a great necessity in the locality for a school conducted on Hindu lines. This is quite clear from the growing popularity of the institution and from the annual reports of the Assistant Inspector of Schools.

The income of the school derived from tuition fees, Government grant and public subscriptions and donations is quite insufficient for its maintenance and falls short of the expenditure by about Rs. 1,200 annually. During the last one year the Mission has incurred a debt of more than Rs. 1,000 for the sake of the school. Besides, the present rented building is unfit for the purposes of the school and should be changed for a more commodious one which means an additional expense. Needless to say that the aim of the Mission to make the school an ideal institution for the education of girls can never be accomplished without the adequate financial support of the public.

It is extremely undesirable that this present state of things should continue any longer. The Mission hopes that it will not have to go to the extremity of either closing the school altogether, or handing it over to some other public body that may not care for religious education at all. It is for the public to decide what the future of the school will be. The Mission appeals to all lovers of education, particularly of the education of girls, to come to its immediate help and establish the school on a sound basis. Contributions in aid of the school will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the undersigned.

SWAMI YATISWARANANDA,  
President, Sri Ramakrishna Mission,  
Mylapore Madras.

#### BIRTHDAY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

The ninety-second birthday of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna falls this year on Saturday, the fifth March, 1927. The anniversary will be celebrated at the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras on Sunday, the 13th March. Feeding of poor Narayanas will form one of the most important items of the programme.

# THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want  
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold  
The Upanishads and believe that ‘ I am the Atman.’ ”

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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## PRAYER

लोकानां त्वं परो धर्मः पुरुषः पुरुषोत्तमः ।  
शरण्यं शरणं च त्वामाहुर्दिव्या महर्षयः ॥  
दृश्यसे सर्वभूतेषु ब्राह्मणेषु च गोषु च ।  
दिक्षु सर्वासु गगने पर्वतेषु नदीषु च ॥  
सहस्रचरणः श्रीमान् शतशीर्षः सहस्राक्षः ।  
त्वं धारयसि भूतानि पृथिवीं सर्वपर्वतान् ॥

O Lord! Thou art the embodiment of the highest virtue in all the worlds. Thou art the Purusha, the Supreme Being. Divine sages proclaim Thee as the greatest Refuge and Saviour of mankind.

Thou art seen manifest in all creatures, in cows as well as in Brahmins, in the different quarters of the globe, in the sky as well as in rivers and mountains.

Thou art the most glorious Cosmic Being with innumerable feet, heads and eyes. Thou art the supporter of the whole earth with all its mountains and creatures.

RAMAYANA—

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF  
SWAMI BRAHMANANDA  
(*At the Belur Math*)

**T**HE name of the Lord purifies both the body and the mind. "I have taken to the name of God, what have I got to fear from? What is there in the world to bind me? I have become immortal by taking the Lord's name"—With such a burning faith one should practise spiritual exercises.

What is the goal of spiritual practices? It is to realise God, to attain the Divine grace. The practices are meant for clearing the heart of all the impurities brought on by lust and greed. Unless this is done, you can never reach your goal, however much you may try.

You cannot attain God's grace nor realise Him unless you purify your heart. Impurities have gathered in it through innumerable lives, and they are to be removed. Sri Ramakrishna used to cite a beautiful illustration—"So long as the needle is covered with mud, it is not attracted by the loadstone. But when the mud is washed off, the needle is naturally drawn towards the loadstone." Similarly the dirt of the mind is washed away if one can think of the Lord and meditate on Him, if one can cry unto Him with repentance, saying, "Lord! kindly forgive me. I won't do anything wrong in future." Then at once the magnet of God draws the needle of the mind. Divine grace flows the moment the mind becomes pure; and then the realisation of God takes place as a matter of course.

God is the sun of knowledge. He can be seen only when He reveals His glory to the seer. In fact, so long as a person cherishes a desire for wordly enjoyment, he cannot have a sincere yearning for the knowledge or vision of God. Children forget themselves when they get dolls to play with or sweets to eat. But after a time

they lose all charms for them and want to go to the mother. Such is also the case with men. Only after they become satiated with the enjoyments of the world, they long for God. Then the thought of God-realisation becomes uppermost in their mind. They eagerly hear what others have to say about God and try to realise Him in their own lives.

Noble desires do not arise in the mind easily. Know this for certain that those who have got them are the objects of the special grace of God. In this world of Maya, men receive innumerable blows and suffer untold miseries; but still they do not want to change their course. Strange enough, they go again and again to the same place only to get blow after blow. If some one gives them a good counsel they get annoyed with that person. Herein lies the fun.

Men know full well that if they put their hand into the fire, it will get burnt, but still they do it again and again. Not only that; they invite others also to do likewise. And if any man differs from them they call him mad, and if possible, go even to the extent of persecuting him.

Don't you see how guardians try their best to raise all sorts of obstacles in the way of the boy who wants to take to the religious path, to lead a Sannyasin's life? But they do not take sufficient care to bring round one who may lead a wild life, and become a source of evil to oneself, to others and to the country. All the trouble arises only when a boy wants to live a virtuous life. People try their utmost to drag him down to their own level.

Do you know what the father of one of our monks once said referring to his own son? He said, "I would have been happy had he died instead of becoming a monk. There is no control over death, and one has to yield to it. But I cannot bear to see others taking away what belongs to me. Had I known before, that he would come to this, I would have devised means to poison him

in the lying-in-room itself, and thus put an end to the whole trouble." This is what is called the world, so full of selfishness. People lose themselves in anger the moment self-interest is hurt. But they have not the sense to understand that if a person is able to be a true monk not only does he do good to himself but also paves the way for the spiritual welfare of those near to him.

Nowadays people have become so very restless that they have not the patience to act after serious thinking. They take up whatever comes in their way, without caring to think whether it is likely to do them good. But the mischief does not end here. People train up their children in such a way that they too have to suffer like their parents when they grow up.

Everyone is born with the impressions of innumerable past lives. The tendency for enjoyment is already strong and the training one gets in childhood intensifies this propensity. But how fortunate must be they who have already come out or are trying to come out of the manifold dangers that threaten their spiritual life!

Through the grace of God, you have been able to get out of the world. Beware, that you do not miss this rare opportunity of reaching your destined goal. Be up and doing, and realise God. Don't pay heed to anything else; look up to Him alone. He will take up your whole burden. And you will see that all your lower desires and cravings will leave you altogether.

What can we know of God with our little brains? Nothing. Therefore I ask you to surrender yourself completely to Him. His will be done. He is omnipotent. What power has man? All that you can do is to love God. Have intense yearning for Him. The whole world is mad for something or other; then why run mad after the fleeting objects of the world? Better be mad for the sake of God. The goal is to realise God. ~ Work can never be the object of life. Even

selfless work is not an end in itself, but is only a means to Divine realisation.

Practise spiritual discipline and advance in the way of God. Then you will know that God alone is real, and all else is unreal, and the realisation of God is the ultimate goal of life. You may get a little more light as the result of a few days' religious practice. But don't you think that you have got everything. Continue your discipline and move onward and onward. And then you will realise God. You will be blessed with His vision. You will be able to know Him intimately.

Hear me, my boys. You are all born of good families, and are well-educated too. You have had enough of study, argument and discussion; why care for more? Now compose your mind and fix it on God. Say to your mind "Plunge into the ocean of God." You have given up the world. And if you again remain busy with trash without dedicating yourself to God, you will lose both this world and the next. Through the grace of the Lord you have got noble thoughts and aspirations. Make the best use of this Divine grace. Don't sacrifice the infinite bliss of God for the sake of the ephemeral pleasures of the world. Pray to the Lord—"Grant me, O Lord! the necessary strength to get over all the obstacles that stand in my way to you."

All worldly pleasures become insipid to him who gets a taste of Divine bliss. What is there in the world? Be it name or fame, wealth or children,—nothing can bring peace to man. These add only to his misery and anxiety.

Why have you come here leaving your hearth and home? Is it to increase your burden or to lessen it? All the objects of enjoyment, that you see before you, vanish the moment you breathe your last. To speak the truth, they only tend to take you to greater and greater darkness. Do you want to tread the path of darkness



or that of light? When you have once got a glimpse of the light, you should not turn your face from it. Don't look at the things of the world. If you do so, you will get yourself lost in them. So great is the influence of desires that if they once leave an impression on your mind, they will drag you down lower and lower and they won't even let you feel your downward course. The only way to be saved from these dangers is to offer yourself solely to God.

## EDITORIAL NOTES

### NEED FOR COMMUNAL ORGANISATION

**W**E want the union of the entire human race. There is absolutely no doubt as regards this ultimate goal. But to attain to it, there must take place first of all the union of the various communities that people this great motherland of ours. Further, side by side with the movement towards the right types of nationalism and internationalism, special attempts should be made also to develop among the innumerable members of each community a healthy collective sense that will enable them to realise their unity with one another, without creating any spirit of antagonism against other communities. To come to practical questions, it is idle to talk of national and international movements alone, when the different sections of our various communities are warring against one another, doing incalculable harm not only to themselves but also to the whole social organism. In the present state of the country we are certainly in need of communal organisations of the right sort that will effect the union of the individuals and groups forming a particular community, and will at the same time promote the unity among all the communities. Just as we want the Mahommedan and other communities to be strengthened and actuated by the highest ideals of religion, so also we are anxious to see the Hindu society properly organised and inspired by the noblest traditions and culture of the Sanatana Dharma of India. The Indian people form a mighty body that is at present suffering from a low vitality. Besides, its various members have become more or less diseased. Hence along with the general streng-

thening of the entire organism, all its limbs also are to be specially invigorated, though certainly not at the cost of one another.

#### ORGANISATION OF HINDU SOCIETY

The Hindu community is the largest in the country, and unfortunately it is also by far the most disorganised. All other communities in India have been organising themselves and gaining in individuality and power. It is the duty of the Hindus also to organise its various sections and to promote their all-round welfare without intruding upon other peoples' rights. This becomes imperative when we think of the grave dangers that face Hindu society. Needless to say that we do not want to take an alarming view of the situation as we are quite sure of the glorious future of our race. But anyway, the reality, however grim it may be, must be faced. And when we do that, we are obliged to say that Hinduism is threatened by disruption from within and onslaught from outside. In the eternal life of Hinduism such dangers were not new. They were always averted before and are sure to be got over even now. But immediate steps are to be taken in this direction. Hindu society is to be properly organised. And the main object of this organisation should be to remove the internal defects—the causes of disintegration, and also to strengthen the bonds of union among the various members of the community.

#### CO-OPERATION AMONG THE MEMBERS

One of the most pitiable facts in modern Hindu society is the want of co-operation among the numerous socio-religious groups, castes and creeds, sects and denominations. The term Hindu includes the so-called orthodox sects, the reforming sects that came into existence during the Mahommedan period, and the reforming sects of modern times. How to bring about the union of these heterogeneous elements? This is the problem of all problems.

The panic of a common danger may tend to bind them together for the time being. But in the absence of this external impetus, the mechanical alliance will automatically cease to exist. And for want of an inner bond, disunion and disruption only will result as a matter of course. Hence it is that in order to effect a real solidarity, greater stress should be laid on positive and permanent than on negative and passing factors of union. Indeed, to be abiding, union must be brought about by a proper understanding of one another, and established on the deeper

basis of culture. It is a very happy sign that most of our orthodox and reforming sects, both old and new, are gradually coming to recognise their inner bonds. And as its result, the gulf between the orthodox and the Vaishnavite cults, between the Sanatanist and the Arya Samajist, between the orthodox Hindu and the Brahmo has become less wide to-day than it was even a few years back. The reforming sects showed a tendency to cut themselves off from the main body of Hindus, who come to look upon them as persons outside the pale of the Hindu community. Now both the parties are finding out their mistake, and are realising their spiritual affinities and interdependence as parts of a mighty organism.

#### THE BAFFLING DIVERSITY OF FORMS

One of the most deplorable facts in our modern religious life is that religion has come to be identified with some particular forms of worship and with certain rules of eating, drinking and marriage. All these forms and rules vary widely from one another with the different socio-religious groups and with the change of time, place and circumstances. The orthodox and the reformers differ among themselves and from one another. Leaving aside others, in the orthodox fold itself we find innumerable Ishtams or chosen ideals that are worshipped in their different aspects with diverse rituals and ceremonials. In the South, the God in the temple is to be worshipped from a safe distance. The touch of the devotee is believed to pollute the image and hence worship is to be done with the help of the priest alone. In the North, as at Benares, the devotee will never feel satisfied unless he touches the Lingam and worships it with his own hands. As regards food, the average Tamil Brahmin thinks that it is vitiated by the sight of a non-Brahmin, but, he has no objection to eat cooked food carried in a tramcar, so long as it remains unseen by others. The Bengali Brahmin, on the other hand, does not believe in "sight-pollution", but according to him the same food is polluted by the touch of a low caste man, even if it is completely hidden from view. The Kashmiri Brahmin, however, has no scruple to take the food carried on the end of a stick by his Mussalman servant who should not anyway touch it with his own hands. In the South again the orthodox Brahmin will never take the water touched by a non-Brahmin, while a Northern Brahmin will usually have no such objection in case the person is a high-class non-Brahmin. As regards marriage custom, a South

Indian Brahmin, who is a vegetarian, may marry his maternal cousin, or even his sister's daughter, while a Northern Brahmin, who may take even animal food, will shudder at the thought of marrying so near a relative. Again, throughout India, the marriage of men of the higher castes with women of the lower castes has fallen into disuse, but is still prevalent in Nepal and is looked upon as quite an orthodox custom in that part of the country. Authorities differ as regards what is orthodox and what is unorthodox. The proud Nambudri Brahmins of Malabar, who regard themselves as the purest Brahmins on earth, follow a number of social customs which are looked down upon by the Brahmins of other places as heterodox and quite against the code of conduct followed throughout the country.

#### THE UNDERLYING UNITY

Diversity of customs and ceremonies there is in every society. And in the vast Hindu society, which is older than any other living community, this variety appears to be infinite. But at the back of it there lies a grand unity of purpose which ordinarily eludes the grasp of the average critic. Orthodox or unorthodox, all our different sects and creeds are members of the same socio-religious body. And whether they know it or not, they follow certain essential truths which should now be emphasised more than the points of difference. They may perform their worship with various forms, but in doing so they offer their heart's homage to the same God conceived in different ways. Again, all forms and ceremonies, rules and restrictions imply a certain physical and mental discipline essential for man's spiritual progress. We must try to recognise this underlying object. But this does not mean that no reform is necessary. It implies instead that all our forms and customs are not to be followed as they are. We must retain those that are helpful, give up those that are useless or harmful, and adapt others again to suit our modern needs and condition.

#### THE LINE OF REFORM

Hindu Society certainly needs reform. And the surest way to do it is to vitalise the entire community by making the same current of culture flow through all its various parts. The highest Aryan culture is to be democratised. Whatever the so-called orthodox may think and say, the conflict between the

Brahmin and the non-Brahmin, the high caste and the outcaste, that divides our society to-day, can be completely stopped by the cultural elevation of all the sections. But unfortunately the Brahmin, who feels very proud of his ancestry, has fallen low by his neglect of Dharma. The non-Brahmin, who is smarting under the brand of inferiority, cannot rise because he still neglects the higher culture in which lies the strength of the Brahmin. The so-called "untouchable" who has now become conscious of his miserable condition, does not feel the need of following a higher code of conduct through which alone he will be able to elevate himself in the eyes of others. What we want now, more than anything else, is an approximation towards a common level of culture by all castes and sub-castes, high and low. And this is the surest way of unifying the manifold sections of the vast Hindu community.

#### NEED FOR DYNAMIC HINDUISM

Hinduism is beset with dangers. It has become the target of a severe attack by the missionary religions. Besides, it has become a danger to itself. It has lost its power of assimilation, and is swayed by an intolerable form of exclusiveness that forces thousands of its members to seek the folds of other religions. Hinduism is thus losing in number. And when the missionaries of Christianity and Islam are busily active in trying to convert the Hindus to their respective faiths, it is nothing short of suicide on the part of the Hindu leaders to look upon the matter with indifference. The conversion of the high caste and educated Hindu has become a thing of the past, but that of the lower and illiterate classes is going on without much obstruction. To stop it completely, Hinduism has to take greater care of its masses, and to remove the social evils that are primarily responsible for their desertion. There is no doubt that if the educated classes organise movements for the economic, social and spiritual welfare of the people, the conversion to other faiths can be put an end to, in no time. But this alone will not be enough. Along with this, there must proceed the re-admission of all those who were perverted from Hinduism. Besides, new elements also must be assimilated. The doors of the Hindu religion must be opened to all who are willing to come into its fold. In the memorable words of Sister Nivedita, a true child of dynamic Hinduism, the key-note of Hindu society should be—"Instead of passivity, activity; for the standard of weakness, the standard of strength; in place

of a steadily-yielding defence, the ringing cheer of the invading host." In short, Hinduism must be aggressive, but as Swami Vivekananda puts it, "aggression in a religious sense only." And the message of this dynamic religion is that the Hindus must set their house in order, preserve to the fullest their cultural integrity, and propagate in an organised manner the grand ideals of the Eternal Religion, not only throughout the country but also in foreign lands."

## GOD WITHIN

*By Swami Atulananda*

### II

THE question now arises: How to attain to that blessed state when we realise that God dwells within us as the soul of our soul? Let us first ask ourselves the question: What am I, what is the real I who is the base of my personality, who acts through me? What is this life of which I seem to be a part, and in which I live and move and have my being?

If there is an ever-blissful, eternal I behind my personality, then all the phenomena of the universe are external to my real being. As the dream is unreal considered from the waking state, this ever-changing world is then unreal compared to that unmoving, immutable divinity hidden within me as "oil in seeds, as butter in cream, as fire in wood."

To us the world appears as the only reality. But so does the dream while we are asleep. It is only after we awake that we realise the unreality of the dream. So also when we rise to a higher state of consciousness, to the superconscious state, do we realise the dream-like nature of this world-life. When we reach that state we are really awake. Life with all its likes and dislikes, its pleasures and sufferings, is then seen as a passing dream, real while it lasts, but unreal when compared with the reality of our eternal being. Real existence which is hidden from the eye of the ordinary man wrapped in the darkness of ignorance, is the source of all light and wisdom to him who has realised the truth. And that which appears as the only reality to the ignorant, the sage realises as only a dreamlike existence.

So long as we are satisfied with this external life, the soul remains in bondage. Desire for this world brings us into this

world. If we want to rise to a higher state of consciousness we must create a strong desire for it, the desire to become super-conscious, to know what life really is. The Yoga Vasishtha shows us the way: "First listen to the true explanation of what life is; then ponder over it; then realise it." Desire for this ordinary life of ignorance is the cause of our bondage; desire to realise the truth that we are not this body but the eternal soul, will make us free. We must attune our consciousness to the higher Self, the Real within us. We must draw ourselves away from worldly thoughts and remember always that we are the Soul. Sri Sankaracharya says, "He who always thinks of this world and at the same time hopes to realise his divine nature is like the man who swimming across a river takes hold of a crocodile thinking it to be a log of wood." The crocodile will take hold of him and drag him beneath the water, and he will never reach the other shore.

If we desire godly things we must think of God. Where our thoughts are, there we are. Thinking of the world makes us worldly; thinking of the Divine makes us divine. We must broaden our mental horizon. The Swami Vivekananda said, "Let your nature be as deep as the ocean, as firm as the rock, as peaceful as the moon; then the desire for truth will be awakened."

It requires great and constant effort to think pure and holy thoughts. But without effort we cannot succeed. "He alone escapes from the web of illusion even as the lion escapes from the trap, whose every act and thought is attuned to the Supreme." And another scripture says, "You may talk philosophy, worship all the gods, observe ceremonies, sing hymns day and night, but know this for certain, liberation comes to him alone who knows his true Self the Atman within."

Our divine nature must be realised. Then we shall taste the Bliss residing within every living being. Life, as we live and know it now, is the great disease of the soul. When we realise that we are the Atman, then the disease will be cured and we shall be free. Patiently and faithfully we must aspire to realise the Truth, even until our death.

The seeker after self-knowledge has to remember always that he is the eternal witness to this world-show. Worlds come and go, spheres after spheres unfold themselves, but the Atman, the Soul of man remains stationary and unmoved. This must be realised.

The Soul is self-sufficient; its very nature is bliss; it does not require anything or anybody to make it happy. The soul is always free and he who realises this is free even in this life.

So long as we depend on any thing or anybody to make us happy, we are not free, we are the slaves of external conditions. But when we realise that our very nature is divine, that all happiness comes from within, then we are free. Nature can then no longer enslave us, for all happiness is then found within our soul, the source of all existence.

The sages tell us that to the free soul the universe is of no more value than a little water collected in the hoofprint of a cow. "The sages roll up the universe even as one rolls up his prayer-mat after worship." The universe with all its millions of worlds and wonders has then served its purpose. The liberated sage has read and understood the book of life. And putting aside the book he dwells in eternal peace.

Thinking and meditating on these lines is one of the means to attain self-knowledge and to become free and blessed for ever: "He who sees, perceives and understands this, loves the Atman, the Self, delights in the Atman, revels in the Atman. He becomes the ruler of his own self, he becomes the lord and master of all creation." For the free soul there is no bondage, no limitation. He realises his infinite nature. "The Infinite indeed is below, above, behind, before, to the right and to the left. It is indeed all this. The Infinite is the I: I am below, I am above, I am behind, before, to the right and to the left. I am all this; I am the Atman, the Atman is all this."

The man of Self-realisation finds eternal bliss. He realises that From Bliss has come all creation, by Bliss it is maintained, towards Bliss does it evolve, and into Bliss does it enter. To the sage, "Heaven is filled with peace, and so are the sky, earth, water, trees, all Beings, the creator and his creation; all is peace and bliss."

This is the experience of all mystics who have reached the highest state of consciousness. "My *Me* is God," says a Christian saint, "nor do I know my self-hood save in Him." "The soul," says St. John of the Cross, "becomes transformed in God."

The sages identify their consciousness not with the little, limited self but with the eternal Being. "When I empty myself of my little self," says Eckhart, "then I am above all creation, then I am what I was and evermore shall be." The Hindu scriptures teach that he who knows Brahman, becomes



Brahman. This realisation is the aim and the fulfilment of all religions. The Soul, abides beyond all manifestation which is only its expression, a reflection of its splendour and Mukti; and salvation consists in anchoring one's consciousness in one's Real Being. This is our healthy, natural state, no longer clouded by the disease of ignorance. "To the self-controlled and serene, the Supreme is the object of constant meditation."

## THE DOCTRINE OF EXPERIENCE AS THE ONE SELF

By Prof. K. Sundararam Aiyar, M. A.

### VI.—THE BRAHMAN—

#### ITS DISTINCTIVE PROPERTY (OR DEFINITION)

THERE is a saying among Indian thinkers that an object is known through its *Pramana* and *Lakshana*—i. e., through the source whence we derive our knowledge of it and through the defining of it by its characteristic property (*asadharana-lakshana*). We have already frequently pointed out that the Upanishads (of the Vedas) form the *Pramana*, the source of our knowledge of Brahman. The Maha-Vakyas, too, are still more specially, the source of that knowledge as noumenal Experience (the one Innermost Reality without a second). The sentence—*Tat-tvam-asi*—is especially famous as the *Upadesa-Vakya*,—the sentence by which the Guru conveys the final teaching regarding Brahman to the qualified disciple who desires liberation from the trials and wanderings of life in the phenomenal universe. This sentence means, "That art Thou." It is obvious that the import of a sentence can be known only when the exact meaning of the words forming its component parts are known. The word "That" denotes Brahman, and we have first to define it,—to state its *lakshana* or characteristic property. Only when its definition has been clearly set forth and grasped can we easily comprehend the details of the synthesis by which we determine the exact nature of the various points constituting the Upanishadic doctrine of reality.

It is a truism that every object is defined by its characteristic or differentiating property—by that feature of it which appertains to it alone, and to no other thing or person. Now,

the Taittiriya-Upanishad defines Brahman in two ways so as to satisfy this requirement. One is contained in the Second (or Brahma) Valli and is usually styled its *Svarupa-lakshana* (essential nature or aspect),—*vis.*, “*Satyam-Gnanam-Anantam*” (Existence—Knowledge—Bliss). Each of these three is implied by the two others, and so one and all denote or refer to the same object. *Satyam* is pure Existence,—untainted by any conditioning adjuncts in time or place in the universe of phenomena. *Gnanam* is that which illuminates all other objects, while it remains self-illuminating and incapable of being lighted up by any other. *Anantam* means that which is free from both beginning and end, and is beyond time, place, and causation. The other definition is given in the third (or Bhṛigu) Valli, and is as follows:—“That from which these beings are born,—by which, when born, they live,—into which they enter at their death” (III. 1). The sentence finally determining the sense of this passage is given in III. 6,—“From bliss these beings are born; by bliss, when born, they live; into bliss they enter at their death.” This definition is known, in the technical language of the Vedānta, as *tatastha-lakshana*, a property which is occasional and precarious (*Kadachitka*). That is, it is a property which, though a distinctive and characterising attribute of Brahman, has no unconditional and invariable relationship with it, but only a relation which is accidental and uncertain,—as, for example, a crown in the case of a king,—and so cannot be said to be of the essence of Brahman.

The word *tatastha* only means “an object situated on the bank” (of a river or tank hard by). A person who wishes to quench his thirst asks a bystander where water is to be had. The latter mentions to him a tree standing on the bank of a river (or tank) hard by. Though this tree does not define what is sought for by any of its distinctive properties, it is enough to indicate it and lead the inquirer to it, though it is a fact or feature only temporarily associated with it.

Vedantic writers point out that, in a definition, there should be neither a contradiction (*virodha*), nor that which is unknown and unheard-of (*aprasiddha*). In the first place, the definition of Brahman as the active agent and cause of the creation, *etc.*, of the world contradicts its essential nature as *nirviśeṣha*,—free from all limiting conditions or attributes. Nowhere have we seen a thing which is eternal, possessing as its distinctive feature (or attribute) some thing, or quality which

is the transient effect of a "purely external or internal activity. But that which is permanent may be a *cause* of what is ephemeral. Further, whatever is an active agent must itself be an effect (*kritaku*), and therefore impermanent (*anitya*), and so cannot be of the *essence of Brahman*. For the Upanishad has defined it as *Satyam*, permanent Being. Similarly, if *Gnanam* and *Anantam* are its properties, Brahman cannot be *nirvishesha*, free from limiting conditions. In the *second* place, we have never heard or known of any object which is *nirvishesha*, without some qualifying property. Hence, the Vedantic conception of Brahman is open to the objection of being *aprasiddhu*. In the *third* place, if it is true (as some contend) that *Satyam*, *etc.*, are of the essence of Brahman, then we ask, how can an object be its own essence? We find everywhere that only the properties (*dharma*s) of an object help us in distinguishing it from others, and so these must form its essence.

The above objections can be easily seen to be baseless, if the following considerations are borne in mind. An object has to be viewed in two aspects, primarily as *vachya* (spoken of as possessing an attribute or relation); and *secondarily*, as *lakshya* (as only pointed and referred to, or indicated, by a *sign*). In this latter case, the sign has no other function (or significance) than to indicate the object, and cannot be regarded as having any *relation* to it, either essential or accidental. This is exactly what has to be borne in mind in regard to *Satya*, *etc.*, as the definition (*lakshana*) of Brahman. Writers on Vedanta mention an analogy in order to make the matter clear. When the moon is defined as a surpassingly luminous object, the aim *for the time being* is neither to define it so as to make us aware of its luminosity, nor its relation to other sources of light in the sky, but only to point to us the object in the sky called the moon. The objection on the ground that it is contradictory to speak of the Brahman as *both* conditioned (*savishesha*) on the ground of its being the cause of creation, *etc.*, and also unconditioned (*nirvishesha*) in its essential nature (*svarupa*) is untenable not only on the grounds already stated, but also on the ground that a sentence must be understood according to its true (or intended) purport in the context,—*i. e.*, *latiparya*—, not according to what *seems* to be its meaning at first sight or what we wish to assign to it in order to advance any purpose of our own. *Satyam* *etc.*, are mentioned by the Sruti only in order to signify that Brahman has no attributes and thereby to differentiate it from all other objects existing in the universe or conceivable by the

mind of man. Furthermore, as *each* of the words signifies the same object, there is no objection to their *collectively* signifying something different from what each denotes. That is, even though *each* of the three terms denotes (or *seems* to denote) a limiting condition attaching to Brahman, there is no objection to their *collectively* signifying something different from what must distinguish the *meaning* of a word (*Padartha-upasthithi*) from the *object* which it denotes (*vyakti-visesha-upasthithi*). In the latter case, there is no reference to the relation (*sam-sarga*) in which the object stands to any other. In the former case, we may have a reference to such a relation, and so we may affirm that there is no contradiction between the two modes of defining adopted. We may apply this distinction here. There is no contradiction between (a) our reference to Brahman as world and (b) our reference to it as being *Satyam*, etc., in its essential nature (*Svarupa*). The Taittiriya Upanishad in its two-fold definition of Brahman has two different aims,—*first*, to differentiate it from other objects (like *pradhana*, *kala*, *svabhava*, etc.,) which, according to other and non-Vedic systems, are understood as the original cause of the creation, etc., of the universe; *secondly*, to remove the false identification of it with purely material and non-intelligent objects like body, mind, etc. and make clear its essential nature as *Satyam*, etc.,—*i.e.*, as the one absolute and innermost self-effulgence and bliss which is free from all relation to, or dependence on, any object in the phenomenal universe. The Brahman is thus taught to us as both the efficient and material cause (*abhinna-nimitta-upadana karana*) of the universe,—and, hence, the universe has no existence apart from its identification with Brahman. Hence, also, the Brahman which is identified with, and conditioned by primordial matter (*mayopahita*) is the same as the eternal, unconditioned, the pure Being and Intelligence in its essence (*nitya-suddha-buddha-mukta-svabhava*). The only difference is one of *aspect* only, and there is one Existence only without a second.

That such a definition of Brahman is not open to the objection that it can be established—like the definition of an extraordinary source of energy or a perfected and powerful personality (*sidha-purusha*)—from any ordinary source of knowledge is shown by Vyasa in the Sutra 1.1, 3,—“*sastra-yonivat*.” Sankara points out that this Sutra can be interpreted in two ways,—either (1) “the sastra (Veda) is the only source from which it (Brahman) can be known” or (2) “Brahman is

the source of the sastra." In the latter sense, the Brahman in its *mayopahita* aspect—as self-conditioned by the primordial matter with which Brahman is identified in time without a beginning—is the one supreme being and personality which is competent to be the revealer of the Veda which is the repertory of all knowledge of truth and so having the omniscience needed to be the creator of this strange and complex world of infinite variety in evolution,—a world in which the near, the felt, the visible and the tangible rest mysteriously on the remote, the invisible, the intangible and unlimited Absolute, and both are identified with, and distinguishable from, each other.

Here a question is raised,—why should Brahman be accepted as the single cause of all the *three* processes in the evolution of the world,—*viz.*, creation, preservation, and destruction? The answer is that, if we accept the view that there are (or may be) three distinct causes, it will contradict the statement in the Sruti that Brahman is "one only without a second." Also, as Brahman is "one only," it must be *both* the efficient and the material cause of the world,—"*abhinna-nimittopadana-karana*", as it is called. This conclusion will be contradicted, if we hold either that it is only the efficient cause and so the cause of the world's creation and preservation, or that it is only the material cause and so the object into which it is finally dissolved. Further, if Brahman is only the material cause, it will be nothing but *maya* or *prakriti*,—*i.e.*, matter in its primordial and homogeneous condition, and so unintelligent. But, without intelligence, the causal principle of the world (*jagat-karana*) cannot have the three powers of knowledge, desire, and activity (*jnana-sakti*, *iccha-sakti*, and *kriya-sakti*) which are all needed for the world's creation, preservation, and destruction. Further, the Taittiriya-Upanishad distinctly points out that the Brahman (which is of the essential nature of *Gnanam* or Intelligence) is the direct cause of the creation of Akasa. "From this Atman, ether (*akasa*) issued" (II.1).—To the objection that there is no known example of a combination, in the same substance, of causation of both kinds, the reply is, *first*, that we rely on the authority of the Sruti which says of the Brahman,—"*It desired, let me become manifold.*" This passage shows that all the three powers above-mentioned—*viz.*, knowledge, desire, and activity (or will)—are combined in the Brahman. It is not, however, to be imagined that these three powers (*saktis*) inhere as attributes in the Brahman. They only *indicate* the Brahman by implication (*lakshana*), and do not

*attach* to it as inseparable properties (*dharmas*). For, then, Brahman would become liable to change (*parinama*) and would cease to be *Satya*, permanent and changeless. If, indeed, these three properties (or functions) were *permanently* attached to Brahman, the processes of creation, preservation, and destruction would be ceaselessly going on,—an idea which is self-contradictory and absurd. Besides, the world has only a phenomenal reality, but the Brahman (*Satyam*) is a transcendental and noumenal existence,—the basal support (*adhisthana*) on which the world (of matter) is falsely superposed (through a process of identification) so as to appear real,—even as silver is superposed and identified with the mother-of-pearl. Finally, the Sruti also says:—"Brahman entered into the body as this jivatma (living self)." Hence, it is only so long as "this living self" is ignorant of his true nature as the one absolute reality "without a second," that it believes in the reality of the world.

Finally, we may very briefly refer to a discussion based on the Prasna-Upanishad (VI.2—4). The passage is as follows:—"Even here within the body is that person (*purusha*) in whom these sixteen parts (*shodasa-kalas*) have their origin. He thought within himself,—who, departing from this body, I (too) shall depart; and who, staying here, I (too) shall stay; he created breath; from breath (he created) faith, ether, air, fire, water, earth, senses, mind, food; from food (he created) strength, penance, sacred formulae (*mantras*), ritual, the worlds; in the worlds (he created) the name (*i.e.*, the individual)." It is contended that the "Purusha within the body" mentioned in this passage as having created various objects including the five elements must be Hiranyagarbha—Brahma, the creator,—**not** the Brahman or Supreme and Absolute Existence already discussed, but *the first living soul* (*prathama-jivi*). We cannot here sum up the entire discussion, but shall state a few objections against this view. *First*, the passage mentioned refers to "*Prana*"—*i. e.*, Hiranyagarbha—as have been "created", and so the latter cannot be the Supreme Existence (or Brahman) who is spoken of as the originating cause of creation, *etc.*, in the Taittiriya Upanishad and in the Sutra (I. 1 2) which gives the definition (already established) of Brahman. *Secondly*, we learn from the Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad that Hiranyagarbha was subject to feelings, like fear (*bhaya*) and pain (*arati*) when he found himself alone (*ekaki*). Further, Hiranyagarbha is only the efficient cause (*nimitta-karana*) of the creation mentioned in the

Prasna-Upanishad passage above-quoted, while Brahman (in the Taittiriya-Upanishad and in the Brahma-Sutras of Vyasa) is *both* the efficient and the material cause of the universe. Besides, as the *jivas* (living souls) in the universe are all eternal beings (*nityas*), they cannot have a *Nimitta-Karana* (or creating intelligence) for their own creation. Hence, the creating principle mentioned in the above passage of Prasna-Upanishad as the origin of Prana (Hiranyagarbha) *etc.*, must be only Brahman, the one Absolute Being which is both the efficient and the material cause of the phenomenal universe which owes its origin to the false superposition of primordial matter (*maya*) on Brahman. *Thirdly*, in the Prasnopanishad itself, after teaching of the Purusha with the sixteen parts (*kalas*), *Pippaladu* himself says:—"Thus far only do I know this highest Brahman *viz.*, that there is nothing higher than this" (VI.7). Then the six inquirers after worshipping him, said to him:—"Thou art as father to us—thou who hast enabled us to cross to the other end of (the ocean) of ignorance." This shows us clearly that the passage quoted relates to the one absolute Existence beyond the phenomenal universe and not to the Hiranyagarbha, the first *jiva* who plays a minor part in the work of creation. Further, as the sixteen parts (*kalas*) includes the five elements, the *purusha* mentioned cannot be Hiranyagarbha, but the supreme Being (or Paramesvara). *Fourthly*, in the Brihadaran-yaka passage relating to Hiranyagarbha (above referred to). Hiranyagarbha is *not* stated to have created the five elements of his own age (*Kalpa*). Further, Hiranyagarbha himself and the devas, men, *etc.*, of other Kalpas (than his own) are created by another, *viz.*, Paramesvara, the supreme Personality (of God).

We have only contented ourselves here with the putting forth of a few simple arguments, and not entered into a full discussion of all the arguments on either side, as we are yet at the commencement of our exposition of the Vedanta doctrine. The doctrine will be presented in a fuller and more reasoned form when we reach a later stage in its development.

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## WHAT IS OUR DUTY?

By C. V. Narayana Aiyar, M. A.

OUR scriptures ask us to do our duty with unflinching courage and without expectation of the result. But how are we to know what our duty is? Evidently, our duty is something more than the Nitya (usual) or the Naimithika (occasional) karmas prescribed by the Dharma Sastras. These are believed in by some but not by all. Yet we all feel that we have duties which we must discharge if we are to be true to ourselves. Every one feels, some time or other in his life, that he is called upon to do some thing and thinks that that is his duty. One renounces wordly pleasures being convinced that his duty is to search for the truth and to dwell in it forever. Another conceives his duty to be the construction of Chatrams and Choultries. A third goes about preaching or lecturing prompted by the duty to dispel the darkness of ignorance. A fourth builds temples to awaken the religious sense of his country-men.

But these are examples of duty as having been conceived of as something which one ought to do if one is to fulfil the purpose for which one is born. This conception of duty is essentially different from the idea of duty in our every-day life. We speak of our religious duties, our domestic duties, our official duties and so on. We think we have several duties to discharge if we are to remain in this world, but we often go wrong in estimating the relative importance of these duties and commit mistakes in life. Since many duties demand our attention, we are often faced with doubts and difficulties and we lack the wisdom to remove the doubts, and the courage to overcome the difficulties.

Let us take a few concrete instances. Suppose a man, who has a wife and children, is employed somewhere and has to depend entirely upon his monthly salary for the maintenance of his wife and family. The conditions of his employment may be such as to prevent him from getting through his religious duties satisfactorily. Is he to give up his religious duties to the detriment of his soul? Or, is he to give up his employment and thus deprive himself and his family of food?

Think of a wage-earner who hires himself out every day for a certain wage which may just suffice to procure one day's food for himself and his family. It may happen one day that, for no fault of his, he does not get work. Surely it is his



duty to find food for his children; but are we on that account to say he is right, if he steals from some rich man's house just as much food as may be needed for his starving children?

Suppose a good son is always being asked by his wicked father to do wicked things. Is he to regard his father as a wicked man or as god? Can he console himself that though he has done bad things at the instigation of his father, he has not been guilty of doing wrong acts in any way?

In all these cases, we ought to recognise that only the ignorant and the weak man will find it hard to solve the problem. In fact, the solution of every one of such problems is quite simple. One has merely to exercise one's intelligence or reasoning faculties, come to a solution and act upon it with determination. If a man commits a mistake by doing so, there is in reality no harm at all, for he will profit by the mistake and will not commit it again. It may be that in the meantime he may have to face unpleasant consequences; but after all, that is quite a small matter. Suppose the family man, in the example that we have taken, decides to resign an appointment which does not permit him to look to his religious duties. He will surely find that his action results in starvation to his dear and near ones. He is unable to face that and he begins to think whether he did right to resign his job. He may very soon learn that his attachment to the 'form' of his religious duties was really foolish and that being employed in any office has nothing to do with leading a really godly life; for, every moment when his official duties do not engage the attention of his mind, he can be dwelling in God. So, he soon takes up another job and is all the better for the experience he has gained though it was a bit painful to go through the experience. The wage-earner who stole food would similarly feel the unpleasantness resulting from the violation of the laws of the state and would determine to save some money out of his slender means, even if he has to do it by starving himself occasionally, so that when he gets no work he may not see his children starve. The good but foolish son who obeyed his wicked father will also sooner or later realise that one should not interpret the Upanishadic precept 'Look upon your father as God' too literally. He will learn that obedience to God and His law is more urgent than obedience to one's father. Thus it becomes quite easy to do one's duty if one chooses to do it. All that has to be done is to use one's reasoning powers and to be determined to endure the troubles that may arise owing to any mistake committed in ignorance.

But it might be asked, "May not our intellect sometimes play the rogue with us? Our reasoning powers may prompt us to commit an immoral or dishonest deed. What are we to do then?" The answer is that if the intellect of any one is so unevolved as to give such an advice, there is no harm in his acting up to it; for, even then he will be prepared to face the unpleasant consequences that may result. The intelligent burglar, that breaks open the safe in a Bank and comes off with the treasure does indeed feel, for the time being, that he has come out successful. But he will not feel happy for a long time. If he gets caught, his sufferings are many. Even if he escapes detection, he cannot feel sure that he will be safe for ever. His conscience also goes on pricking him. He will find to his surprise and perhaps regret that the great value, that he attached to the money before he acquired it, very soon vanishes. In truth, an immoral or a dishonest act can never fail to bring unpleasant consequences in its train. Hence even a very successful rogue will gain wisdom by his experience and so will not think of repeating the mistake once done in ignorance.

Another doubt may now naturally arise. Instead of relying upon our limited intelligence, is it not wiser to depend upon the unlimited Divine Intelligence by having absolute faith in Him? Should we not, in other words, 'Trust in God and do the right?' The answer is emphatically 'yes.' If you believe in God, your task becomes much easier than that of other people; for you will feel convinced that God will enlighten you as to what you ought to do under particular circumstances, and you will have the strength of that conviction in carrying out your decision. If you succeed, you will not feel that there is anything surprising in your success, for, it was God that advised you as to your course of conduct or action. On the other hand, if you fail, even then you will not vex yourself, for you will feel certain that what has happened is needful, however unexpected it may be; for in the fulness of your belief, you will easily persuade yourself that God has given these unexpected and perhaps unpleasant results for your own good. The advantage that you enjoy over others who do not have your unfailing faith in God, is that whenever you act after reflection, you act with a conviction that it is God's will that you should act so; whereas those who act after consulting their own intelligence are ever acting with a feeling of apprehension that after all the care they have taken, they may not be doing just the right thing. So when the result shows that they have been in the wrong, they have the pain of witnessing failure and so they require a greater degree

of determination and courage to bear the unpleasant consequences. On the other hand, you are satisfied with any result, for you cannot easily bring yourself to believe that you would have attained to better results under the circumstances.

If, however, your temperament is such that the idea of God is unacceptable, and if you feel that 'God' is subject to limitations while Sat-Chit-Ananda is not, even then there is no difficulty in finding out what your duty is at any particular moment. You have only to use your intelligence and when you do so, you will easily satisfy yourself that the Infinite in you will guide you aright provided you come into contact with it through the exercise of your reasoning powers. Just as the Bhakta will always act with the conviction that God will always guide him, you will always act in the belief that you cannot go wrong if you have rightly understood the will of the Brahman within you. If by results you perceive you have gone wrong, you will speedily come to the conclusion that your fault lay in not having perceived the Infinite in you—in other words, in not having stirred the intuitive faculty in you. So you will set to work again with the determination to arrive at better results. You will not allow your emotions to cloud your vision and by constant practice, you will gain the qualifications needed to have true realisation.

The truth of the matter is that the real Bhakta and the real Gnani are the same and the 'Faith' of the Bhakta is the 'Wisdom' of the Gnani. There is a difference only in name. Both of them rise above the limitations of the mind—while many of us do not—and dwell in the Sat-Chit-Ananda (Existence-Intelligence-Bliss Absolute) to realise it. And what does it matter whether *That* is called 'God' or 'Brahman.'

Thus our *duty*, when rightly understood, is not merely to lead the life of a Sanyasin or a philanthropist or a house-holder. It is all these no doubt, but something more. It is really the determination to use our God-given intellect to find solutions for any problem that may confront us *and* to act up to our convictions letting the consequences go by us without affecting us in the least. In fact circumstances force us to resolve and to act; but the trouble comes in, as soon as we endeavour to preserve equanimity of mind when the expected does not happen. Hence our task is to train ourselves to look at things with detachment. So then, our *duty* is nothing more than the cultivation and development of a sense of detachment. This applies equally to the atheist, the Bhakta and the Gnani.

## AN EPISTLE OF SWAMI VIMALANANDA

"Castle Kernan,"  
Triplicane, Madras.

14—12—06.

My dear Doctor,

You will kindly excuse me for not having replied to your kind letter earlier. Swami Ramakrishnanandji is now at Pakshi Tirtham with Swami Premanandaji and party who are on their way to Rameswaram. I have written this morning to the Swamiji about the photos that you want back from the Trichy friend. Yogin and myself alone are here. Hence I cannot leave this until the Swamiji comes back. I have a great mind, my dear Doctor, to see you all before I start for Calcutta. But I do not know how far I shall succeed in realising my heart's wish. For, it is likely that I shall have to go to Calcutta with Swami Premanandaji's party. They cannot come back earlier than in about three weeks. And they won't stay here long. So, most probably, I won't have time to go to Bangalore. The best thing therefore is to leave everything in the hands of the Lord and be satisfied with whatever comes to pass. But when I think of my poor health and my utter inability to do any work, I find there is no use of my going to Calcutta. I must of course be obedient to the orders of my superiors. But the superiors may not know yet that I am still a perfect invalid and shall remain so till my earthly career is closed. I am to go to Calcutta not to show them my skeleton figure but to do something. What that something is, I have not been able to understand. But I am sure my mere presence only is not required. And yet, I am an invalid and good for nothing. Sometimes I think in this way: "If I cannot do anything for the Ramakrishna Mission, if I cannot adequately serve the Mission, why should I take the advantages of being one of its members? I have no right to do so. I am only contracting a moral debt by taking advantage of membership and yet not serving the Mission in any way." In moments of such reflection, I really feel it to be my duty,—my Dharma—to cease to be a member of the Mission, that is, not to tax the Mission for my maintenance any more but to live upon the charity of private friends—I mean those who will be glad to bear my burden out of pity or affection or love for myself as an individual and not as a member of the Mission. Do I not know how much anguish of body and mind it cost our most dearly beloved Master\* to build up the Mission? A worthless member like me will weaken the Mission instead of

\*Swami Vivekananda.

adding to its strength. Why should I bring discredit upon the Mission, upon the Master Himself, by my own faults and weaknesses? I heard from the lips of the Master—Oh! I still see before my eyes his figure with its every fibre burning with fiery enthusiasm and his heart melting with pity—that he would work himself to death and we too, his disciples, following in his footsteps, would do the same. “I will die, you will die and then the Mother will rise.” To die for the sake of our own growth and for the good of others is the only qualification for becoming a true disciple of Swamiji and a member of the Mission. I know I fall far short of this. One should become a disciple in order to give and not to take. But what am I doing? I am only taking. Here Swami Ramakrishnanandaji is begging from others to keep me comfortable. I want this, I want that. My wants are the largest in number and cost the most and yet I am the most useless member of the Mission!! What an irony of fate! This is extremely painful. Yet I do not know how to get rid of it. Of course I have not decided anything. I won’t decide anything hastily. But these thoughts are coming into my mind now-a-days, and as a true friend and sympathiser I communicate them to you without reserve. But you need not tell them to anybody. For, others may not quite understand me and my feelings.

Since I am not able to do anything practically, I won’t say anything about the work at Bangalore or at any other place. The Lord will see to all that. It is not His will that I am to do anything for Him.

The tone of your letter betrays some disappointment. I am exceedingly sorry for it; but at the same time I cannot help thinking that all these disappointments, though very painful to bear, are paving your way to the inner regions of your heart where God dwells. My disappointments brought in by my bad health are surely working some good in some other way. And I am not therefore sad at heart always. But I have already spoken too much about myself and to speak more is bad. Please convey my best thanks to Mr. V—for his kind card received to-day and tell him all about the state of affair described above. He can slowly begin his meditation if he feels strong enough. You should always remember that you should never over-exert yourself. Take rest whenever you get tired. But to safeguard against laziness you should, at the same time, sit at regular hours and do something to raise your mind to the spiritual plane. There is another important point to which I want to call your special attention and particularly that of V—. When you see some manifestation of Yoga power, such as seeing lights, hearing sounds, etc., do not think that you are very near

your goal and rush to it in hot haste. All these manifestations are good, no doubt, and show that you are progressing. But when you get them, you should be on your guard not to delude yourself into the belief that the Final Goal is very near and that you can reach it by concentrating more deeply and for longer periods of time. I would advise you not to go too deeply into meditation or to devote too long a time to it, until all your physical and moral conditions are particularly favourable for spiritual culture; that is you must be completely away from all worldly concerns, your food must be strictly Sattwic, your company should always be good men devoted completely to God, your health must be very sound, your mind must be quite free from all worldly taints—free from lust, anger, etc.,—and above all, you should be under the personal guidance of a true Guru. These are favourable conditions of body and mind, and until they all come, you must rest satisfied with small and slow progress; that is, you must meditate regularly every morning and evening and attend to the growth of your character. Make the foundation strong and all else will come in time. If you are in a hurry to realise without satisfying the preliminary conditions, you will only make yourself worse. Have patience. Go on slowly but steadily till you are fortunate enough to get all the favourable conditions. To realise the highest is not a joke. Infinite patience, an adamant will and above all snow-white purity are needed to reach the Highest, and it takes long to get these. If you run towards the goal without these, you will break yourself into pieces. Spiritual growth is always all-sided. One-sided growth, if carried too far, is in danger of tumbling down any moment, like a wall raised too high without a broad and deep foundation and without other walls holding it up by direct touch. Just as a bird cannot fly without its two wings and tail, so also a man cannot realise the Highest without Yoga (concentration) practised along with the steadying of character and the broadening and deepening of the heart. I tell you all these not to discourage you but to warn you against possible dangers. May the Lord shed more and more light on the path and give you strength of body and mind to tread it with unflinching devotion! With my best love and good wishes to yourself and all other friends,

I am,  
Yours affectionately,  
(Sd.) VIMALANANDA

P.S. I do not know if I have been able to make myself quite clear on what I have said about meditation. Write to me, please, if any of you have any doubts and I shall try to clear them.

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## IN MEMORIAM

With a very heavy heart we have to record the sudden passing away of Srimat Swami Prakashananda, Head of the Vedanta Society of San Francisco, California. No detailed information as to the Swami's illness has been received as yet. The cable brought us only the sad news of his demise which took place on Sunday, the 13th February last.

At the time of his death, the Swami was fifty-three years old. He was one of the foremost disciples of Swami Vivekananda. He came in intimate touch with the Ramakrishna Order in 1890, and joined it formally in 1896. The very next year he was initiated into Sanaysa by his illustrious Master, after the latter's return from the West.

The Swami was one of the most untiring workers of the Ramakrishna Mission. At the command of his Guru, he went along with a brother-disciple on a lecturing tour to Eastern Bengal, and made such a deep impression on the mind of the public that a centre was soon started at Dacca. Swami Prakashananda possessed great literary abilities and was on the staff of the Prabuddha Bharata and also took active part in the management of the Advaita Ashram at Mayavati for more than three years.

In April, 1906, he was deputed to San Francisco to help Swami Trigunatita in his Vedanta work. He held regular classes and gave public lectures in the premises of the Vedanta Society, known as the Hindu Temple. After the death of Swami Trigunatita in 1915, he took over the charge of the Society, and established it on a stronger basis than before by dint of his one-pointed devotion and hard labour for the cause.

The Swami also used to go out occasionally on lecturing tours for preaching the universal truths of the Vedanta. He was an important speaker at the Congress of Religions and Philosophies held in connection with the Panama Exposition towards the end of 1915. He also delivered lectures on Buddhism in his capacity as the Vice-President of the International Buddhistic Congress. Every-where he won the admiration of all men and women who came in close touch with him by the great simplicity and sweetness that marked his life and teachings.

After sixteen years of strenuous labour in America, the Swami returned for a few months to his motherland towards the end of 1922. During this period he visited many important centres of the Ramakrishna Mission both in Northern and Southern India, delivering lectures at most of these places. An address of welcome was presented to him by the citizens of Calcutta, and

the eloquent reply that he gave touched the hearts of all. The old friends of the Swami were struck to find him absolutely unaffected by all these sixteen years of his life in America. In the midst of fame and glory he continued to be the same jovial and unassuming child of God as he was before he sailed for the West.

He went back to America in the middle of 1923, taking Swami Prabhavananda with him as his assistant. After his return to San Francisco he carried on his activities with renewed vigour, drew new members to the Society and was successful in spreading the sphere of his influence more widely than ever with the help of his able assistant.

In September, 1925, Swami Prabhavananda visited Portland, Oregon, in the course of his lecturing tour, and created a great interest in the Vedanta among the cultured people of the place. A new Vedanta Society was started, and Swami Prakashananda had to go to Portland to conduct its formal opening ceremony at the earnest request of friends. He returned to San Francisco, leaving Swami Prabhavananda in charge of the new centre and was, in spite of great strain to himself, carrying on the work of his Vedanta Society until the middle of last year, when Swami Dayananda was sent from India.

For sometime past the Swami was suffering from diabetes. His physical strength was failing. In his last letter dated the 20th January, he wrote to us—"I am keeping a little better health now." Never could we imagine that he would be taken away from us so soon. However, the inevitable has come to pass and we have to bow to the omnipotent will of the Divine.

It was the burning desire of the Swami to preach broadcast the grand ideals of the Vedanta and the great message of Sri Ramakrishna and his beloved Master. And he asked for fifty able Sanyasins of the Ramakrishna Mission, if so many could be spared, to be trained and sent out by him to the different states of America. Indeed, the unexpected death of the Swami is an irreparable loss to the Ramakrishna Mission and to the cause of Vedanta in the West.

Swami Prakashananda has left his mortal body and passed into life eternal beyond our human ken. But his loving memory and the noble ideal that he realised in his life,—the ideal of purity, self-sacrifice and universal love—will ever continue to inspire his numerous devotees and admirers both in India and America, who always found in him a great spiritual soul, a kind friend and an affectionate teacher. After years of hard labour of love the great worker has now found his well-earned rest at the blessed feet of his Lord and Master. May his soul rest in peace!



## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### SOLIDARITY OF INDIAN SOCIETY

Writing on 'Indian Social Unity' in a recent issue of the *Welfare*, Mr. Jyoti Swarup Gupta deplores the great disunion and discord existing amongst the various religious communities in India. Anyone who has watched with interest the incidents of the last few years in our country would be convinced indeed of the baneful effects of fanatical communalism. And Mr. Gupta rightly declares that the denominational schools and colleges have fostered this spirit, more than anything else. "It was an evil and inauspicious day" he says "when denominational schools, colleges, hostels, and universities were started in the country. They became the centres from which the Hindus and Muslims began to look upon themselves as separate entities. . . . The various problems which confront the country, began to be looked upon with communal and not national point of view." He also considers the various other differences between the communities in their manners and customs, forms of salutation, and modes of dress. He desires that uniformity should be brought about in all these, and a common national flag adopted and a common national festival celebrated.

While accepting that such uniformity may help in strengthening the social solidarity of Indian society, we are not, however, hopeful, that such a state of things can ever come to pass. The real cause of the great evil of communalism lies not in mere outward formalities, but elsewhere. In all nations and communities, similar differences have always existed, but the binding and uniting forces were stronger and greater, than those which tended to disruption. And so our duty at the present day is to create and strengthen the forces that will go to build up a united nation. One of such great forces is common history and tradition. It is that which helps in the moulding of a common civilization. No great nation ever existed on earth, that had not a glorious past, of which all its communities were equally proud. Greece was powerful in spite of several factors, that made for discord, because it possessed a common tradition and a common civilization. The sense of cultural unity which the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* gave it was a great asset to its nationalism. Coming to our own land

we see that in spite of the diversities of race, religious observance, language, customs and manners, the Hindus throughout India have a sense of unity. This is due in no small measure to the great epics—the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, for which all have profound veneration. The feeling of a common history and tradition can be intensified only by the rewriting of Indian history from a truly national point of view. Interested historians have exaggerated the discordant features of our national history, and this has gone to contribute the already rank communalism. In Sir P. C. Ray's words 'It was the policy of the English historian to paint the Hindus and Muslims dark.... Near the palace of Tippu, there was the temple of a Hindu God. A Mahomedan prince who allowed a temple near his palace could not have been a persecutor..... At Dacca, there was a temple built in the time of Jehangir, and within a stone's throw of that was a musjid..... Are not the Hindus proud of the Taj Mahal, equally with the Mahomedans of India,' This is only a single proof in the general misrepresentation of our history. A truly national history, which would inspire the readers with love and devotion to their common motherland would go a great way in bridging the gulf of communalism.

A more effective means by which we can solve the communal problem is to promote a better understanding in matters of religion, between the various communities. At the present day each of them feel, that its religion is distinctly separate from that of the other. But these differences which they feel will vanish when they come to know that the fundamentals of their faith do not vary. Studied in the light of the experience and teachings of Kabir Das, Guru Nanak, Chaitanya and Sri Ramakrishna, all creeds will be found to be but various paths towards one and the same goal. Discord will then give place to harmony and dissension to unity.

#### THE FUTURE OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

Is Indian Philosophy to be reduced to a "cult or to be made alive and real as to become one of the great formative elements in human progress?"

In India to-day, we have two opposite types of men holding two different views concerning the development and progress of Philosophy. On the one hand stand the "Radicals," the "Progressives" who look up to the West for their spiritual guidance. They

cry down every thing that is of India. Her art and philosophy, her ethics and religion, do not appeal to their minds. They consider them as puerile or absurd, barbarous or grotesque. They are carried away by the glamour of the Western Civilisation of to-day and are even ashamed of India's spiritual heritage.

On the other side there stand the Conservatives, who would reduce Indian Philosophy to a cult and forbid all assimilation of what is best in the West. They believe in clinging to dead forms, demand implicit obedience to the letter of the ancient texts, and declare passivity, docility, and acquiescence as the primary virtues of the intellect. This 'cult' idea has been a growth of recent times; it came to be fostered only after the Mahomedan invasion of this country; certainly there were no signs of such deification of authority in the earlier philosophic writings of this country; there was ample scope for intellectual independence. Whether the authority quoted for a proposition was the Veda or an Agama, men were able and ready to offer rational grounds for allegiance to the authorities of their choice. Indeed, authority carried reverence with it, but never to imprison the human spirit. Hence these earlier writings have kept a high level which the present-day philosophical writings have not maintained.

Those who condemn Indian culture outright are ignorant, and those who put it as altogether perfect are ignorant as well.

Our consolation is that such ignorance can at best retard, but never stop human advancement. Backed by the ancient ideals of Indian philosophers, our philosophy is bound undoubtedly to march hand in hand with modern science broadening human outlook and ennobling life.

Professor Radhakrishnan gives us this hope. In a well thought out article in the *Forward Congress and Winter Number*, he rightly observes: "Indian philosophy acquires a meaning and justification for the present only if it advances and ennobles life. The past course of Indian philosophic development encourages us in our hope. The great thinkers Yajnavalkya and Gargi, Buddha and Mahavira, Gautama and Kapila, Sankara and Ramanuja, Madhava and Vallabha and scores of others are India's greatest title to existence, a clear testimony of her dignity as a nation with a soul, the proof that she may yet rise above herself, and the pledge of this supreme possibility"—the possibility of taking a broader view and helping human progress.

## THE AIM OF EDUCATION

In an article on "A thorough Aesthetic Education" written in a recent issue of the *Open Court*, Mr. Hardin T. Maclelland rightly observes that in our quest of the worldly profits and pleasures of life, we are apt to forget its higher purpose. This purpose can be brought home to our minds only by means of the right kind of education. And those who are responsible for shaping our educational policy must therefore bear in mind that the aim of all educational training is the purifying and ennobling of human nature,—the manifestation of the perfection that is already in every man and woman.

It cannot be denied that in the light of such an ideal, the system of higher education current to-day requires a thorough overhauling, nay even modifying so as to serve the best interests of the country. In the craze for the "more profitable," there is every chance of our forgetting that the moral aim of all knowledge is the enlightenment and ennoblement of man. Referring to this Mr. Maclelland observes—"I do not mean merely studious training in history and technique of ethics or art theory but a repical cultivation of all the innate powers of human faculty and creative genius so that some dependable guarantee may be had that the student will go forth with a conscientious aim to keep his love of beauty pure, to give spiritual expression to whatever originality his nature contains, and thus to live according to morally beautiful. . . principles..." Denouncing the modern system of education, the writer further says—"Too much stress is put upon 'teaching what is practical,' leaving the young barbarians of school age still crude and untaught, and never telling the unsophisticated student that the really practical does not include epistolary deceit for paternal favours, expedient opportunism after economic livelihood, false publicity on one's income-tax report, nor the universal ravine of industrial commercialism."

We should therefore have an exalted aim in view in imparting or receiving educational training. And to realise this aim we must conform to the moral standards set up by the religions of the world—whether Hinduism or Islam, Buddhism or Christianity. Otherwise the result will be a very low type of civilisation, "a veneer-culture,"—"the incorrigible child of every vandal age".

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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

VOICES: By Professor T. L. Vaswani. Published by Messrs. Ganesh & Co., Madras. Pp. 85.

This is a booklet from the pen of Prof. T. L. Vaswani whose fame as a writer and champion of the ancient civilisation of India is widely known. It purports to be a collection of the voices, the author heard through communion with the "Great Silence,"—voices which shed clear light on all the intricate problems of life. The outpourings of his heart upon such subjects as progress, love, idealism, liberty, the purpose of evolution, ethics etc. are really inspiring. He unhesitatingly deprecates the current civilisation and deplores that by breaking loose from spiritual disciplines and laying undue emphasis on "garments and gold," it has created unrest everywhere. His love for his motherland is unbounded. This can be seen from his exhortation to Young India to pray to the Lord for strength to serve the poor and to worship Him with flowers of service and sacrifice.

THE SECRET OF ANA'L HAQQ—With notes and an introduction by Khan Sahib Khaja Khan, B. A.; 69 Jani John Road, Roypettah, Madras. Pp. 238. Price Rs. 2.

The volume before us is an admirable selection from the original Persian—"the Irshdaot-i-Shayk Ibrahim"—that is, the teachings of Shayk Ibrahim. It contains 300 and odd sayings of this great Sufi Saint, expounding the doctrine of 'Ana'l Haqq'—I am the Truth—which idea, the translator has carried through and through the book "as a sap in the tree." When we read such passages as "the knower and the known are the same," "whoever knows God is God himself," "An idolator becomes an idolator when he outwardly sees in the idol, only the 'created' and thus becomes a Kafir," or "There is no difference in meaning but in words and technicalities. Musalmans call him Allah and Hindus, Brahma. God is worshipped everywhere and of all in Heaven and earth," we come across many of the highest truth of religion expressed in very simple words. As trying to bring into closer contact both Islam and Hinduism and that at a time when there is so much talk on the Hindu-Muslim problem—this volume is undoubtedly a welcome addition to our current religious literature.

THE JOURNAL OF ORIENTAL RESEARCH—A Quarterly—Vol. 1, Part 1, January, 1927. Published by Mr. K. Balasubramaniya Aiyar, B. A., B. L., Managing editor and correspondent, Ashram, Luz, Mylapore, Madras. Annual subscription—Inland, Rs. 6. Foreign 10s.

The publication of this learned journal is a clear indication of the fact that Indian scholars are no longer satisfied with leaving all oriental investigations in the hands of Western savants, but are themselves coming to take a lively interest in the history and culture of their own country. As Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyar observes in the foreward, no justification is needed for the addition of this new quarterly to the ranks of those devoted to oriental research. The journal proposes to publish the results of researches in linguistics, logic, literature, religion, philosophy, polity, sociology and other similar subjects.

The volume under review contains learned and original articles—Problems of identity in the cultural history of ancient India by Professor S. Kuppaswami Sastri, M. A., I. E. S.; Linguistic notes on Svaha, Svadha and Svasti by Dr. Kunhan Raja, D. Phil. Kuntaka's attitude towards the theories of Dhvani and Rasa by Dr. K. A. Sankaran, M. A. Ph. D.; The Vyaghras and their identification and the new light on Vakataka history by Prof. A. V. Venkatrama Aiyar M. A., L. T.; The Mystic way of the Bhagavad Gita by Prof. D. S. Sarma M. A., L. T., and other papers from the pen of some promising research students of the Madras University.

The quarterly has got a strong editorial board consisting of some of the scholars whose contributions have appeared in the current number. We accord to it a hearty welcome and wish it a most useful career.

THE HOLY LIFE OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR BHAGAWAN SRI KRISHNA. Part II, by S. N. K. Bijurkar, B. A., published by the author, at Coondapoor, S. K. Price 0-12-0. The Booklet before us deals with Sri Krishna's early life in Mathura and his youthful days in Dwaraka.

HINDU MIND by C. N. Ananta Ramayya Sastri M. A. Lecturer in Dravidian languages, H. H. The Maharaja's College of Arts, Trivandrum. It is an English pamphlet rendered from Apothegmatic Sanskrit Verses.

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## NEWS AND REPORTS

### SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAM, BOMBAY

The foundation stone of a separate building for the school and dispensary conducted by the Swamis of the Ashram at Khar was laid by Srimat Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj, President of the Ramakrishna Mission on Monday, the 14th February last. Swami Sharvananda performed the requisite religious ceremonies which were attended by devotees of different castes, creeds and communities. The total amount required for both the land and building is about Rs. 4,500. The authorities of the Ashram have already secured Rs. 3,000 for the purpose. We earnestly hope that the remaining amount will soon be available through the generosity of the philanthropic public of Bombay.

### SWAMI SHARVANANDA'S LECTURE AT THE BOMBAY UNIVERSITY

At the request of the Registrar, Swami Sharvananda delivered four lectures on the Philosophy of the Upanishads at the University of Bombay from the 1st to the 4th February last. The hall was crowded with appreciative listeners, and many had to stand for want of sitting accommodation. As the Registrar himself observed, University extension lectures were never seen to draw such a large audience. So great was the interest created by the Swami's illuminating lectures, that the Registrar further requested him to deliver another series of lectures from the 10th to the 12th February. The topics were "Law of Karma and Re-incarnation," "Law of Evolution, and Practical Vedanta"—all of which were listened to with rapt attention by a large number of the highly educated men and women of the cosmopolitan city of Bombay.

### SWAMI YATISWARANANDA'S TOUR

Swami Yatiswarananda, President, the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Mylapore, Madras, went to Tindivanam on the 26th January to take part in the birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda celebrated by the local Sri Ramakrishna Ashram.

Next day—the day of celebration—he held a conversazione on the "Practice of Religion" in the morning and also delivered the same evening a lecture on "Vivekananda—the Patriot-Saint of Modern India," in which he pointed out that the illustrious Swamiji's life was the very embodiment of renunciation and ser-

vice, and the ideal he placed before his beloved countrymen was to work "for the freedom of the self and for the good of the world". He returned the next day to Madras.

On the invitation of the secretary of the Vivekodaya Samajam, Trichur, Cochin State the Swami left Madras on the 2nd February, and reached the place next day in the afternoon. The Samajam held its twelfth annual conference in connection with the birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda in the premises of the Vivekodayam High School on Friday, the 4th February and the two following days. Besides opening the Flower Show and Exhibition organised by the Samaj, and distributing prizes to the pupils of the Vivekodayam boys' and girls' schools, the Swami delivered three lectures one on each day, the topics being "the Eternal Ideals of the Sanatana Dharma", "The Theory and Practice of Worship" and "The Message of Dynamic Hinduism." He also held a conversation class on Wednesday the 9th February at the Ramakrishna Dharmashram, Trichur.

The Swami also visited Mangalore at the earnest and insistent request of friends. A programme of public lectures being arranged, he spoke on the 11th February and the two successive evenings on "the Eternal Truths of Hinduism", "The Purpose of Man's Existence", and "The Ideals of the Ramakrishna Mission." He also held a conversazione on Sunday, the 13th February, morning, in which among other things he emphasised the need of the practice of spiritual discipline. From Mangalore he went to Karkal where he conducted a conversation class at the Ashram of the local Ramakrishna Seva Vrinda.

Everywhere the elite of the town attended the lectures and conversations, and evinced great interest in the inspiring teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. After visiting Udipi and Tirupur, the Swami returned to Madras on the 19th February.

#### FOUNDATION OF A NEW MATHI IN COORG

Srimat Swami Nirmalanandaji Maharaj, President of the Ramakrishna Ashram, Basavangudi, Bangalore City laid the foundation stone of the Sharada Vedanta Math at Ponnampet, Coorg on Monday, the 7th February last. We trust that through the earnest co-operation of the devotees of Coorg, the Math will be an accomplished fact in the near future.

#### SWAMI PARAMANANDA'S TOUR

After three months of activity at the Ananda Ashrama, La Crescenta, California, Swami Paramananda left for the Boston



Vedanta Centre on October 25th last. On his way the Swami alighted at Chicago for a few hours and delivered an address before the Kenmore Club. During his stay at Boston he was called thrice to New York where once at Dr. Grier's invitation he conducted one Sunday evening service in the "Church of Truth" and a meditation class the next day. During another visit to the city he was the Chief Speaker at the bi-weekly luncheon given at the Ceylon Restaurant by the "Fellowship of faiths." He also addressed a gathering in Scarsdale—a suburb of New York. The Swami also met in New York Swami Raghavananda of the New York Vedanta Society. Before the Swami returned to the West he got down Swami Akhilananda from the Ananda Ashrama and gave him the charge of the Boston Vedanta Centre. After lectures at Cincinnati, Louisville and Chicago, the Swami reached California to celebrate Christmas at the Ashrama.

#### CHRISTMAS SERVICE AT THE HINDU TEMPLE, SAN FRANCISCO

A special Christmas service was held at the Hindu Temple, San Francisco, on December 25th, at 11 a. m., with the usual devotions.

One entering the auditorium observed Christmas wreaths and evergreens forming the main part of the decorations. There were big vases containing bouquets of choice flowers placed at the feet of the life-size picture of Christ in his Yoga posture. The fragrance of the Indian incense permeating the peaceful and solemn atmosphere of the hall, and the sweet melodies of the Christmas hymns sung so artistically by Miss Isabel Bisset inspired those present with the spirit of reverential worship.

The service opened with a Christmas carol played on the organ by Mrs. G. Bowman, followed by invocations to the Christ Spirit and Vedic chants by Swami Prakashananda.

At this Christmas message the Swami spoke with intense fervour on "The Incarnation of the Christ Spirit," laying great stress on the following particular points: The world-wide and time-worn Christmas celebration is not complete without the unfoldment of the genuine Christ Spirit in our hearts and souls. What the world needs to-day more than anything else is the manifestation in our daily lives of the spirit of real love and forgiveness, the feeling of brother-hood, and above all the conquest of ill-will and self-aggrandizement. That the individual, communal and racial lives should reflect more and more the radiant light of the Star of Bethlehem was his earnest prayer.

**CHRISTMAS SERVICE AT THE VEDANTA SOCIETY,  
PORTLAND, OREGON, U. S. A.**

The chapel at the Vedanta Headquarters was beautifully decorated. Evergreens, with the brilliance of poinsettias and red Christmas bells gave an atmosphere most fitting to the occasion. On the Christmas night, in this artistically harmonious setting, was held a deeply impressive service, Swami Prabhavananda taking as his theme, "The Birth of Christ." His earnest words intensified in the hearts of his hearers the longing for one-pointed devotion to the Christ-Ideal and for the birth of the Christ Within, that each may be able to say, with full realization, as did the Master: "I and my Father are one."

Special Christmas music was sung by a quartet of members and the Swami closed the services with a moving benediction upon all those present.

**CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION AT ANANDA ASHRAMA,  
LA CRESCENTA**

The Christmas at the Ananda Ashrama was celebrated with great joy and solemnity. On the afternoon of the 24th December, a portrait of the Madonna with Child was very artistically decorated with flowers and ferns and was placed upon the altar of the assembly room of the Community House. Christmas carols were sung by a full chorus. Swami Paramananda conducted the Christmas Eve Service, touching with great feeling upon the Christ Child and the significance of the Christ life.

**SWAMI AKHILANANDA AT BOSTON**

At November end Swami Akhilananda was the guest of honour at a large reception at Boston when Swami Paramananda introduced him and those present to co-operate with the new Swami in all possible ways. In response to the warm and hearty reception the Swami spoke eloquently on true brotherhood.

The Vedanta centre of Boston celebrated Christmas, the new Swami conducting the service. There was reading of scripture and chanting of sanskrit prayers. The Swami next spoke on the 'Significance and Necessity of Incarnations' and therein pointed out the helplessness of most people in conceiving an impersonal Deity, how a personal God satisfied the emotional side of human nature, and urged his listeners to meditate and consecrate their lives that they might be filled with pure love and their lives shine forth with the glory of Him who was their ideal.

## SRI RAMAKRISHNA-SEVA SAMITI, SILCHAR.

We are glad to receive the third annual report of the Samiti, which is a good record of the philanthropic activities done by it during the year 1926. Besides rendering medical relief to the poor, the Samiti conducts a free primary school and, a reading room, holds weekly religious classes, attends to the cremation of the dead bodies of poor and helpless people and undertakes relief work during melas and epidemic times.

The total receipts during the year under review, including the last year's balance, amounted to Rs. 708-2-6 and the expenditure to Rs. 478-14-6, leaving a balance of Rs. 229-4-0.

The Samiti is in need of a permanent residence of its own and appeals to the generous public for help.

## SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAM, SHELLA

We have received with great pleasure the first report of the Ramakrishna Ashram, Disson, Shella, (Khasi Hills) for the years 1924—1926. The Ashram was started as an experimental centre by a worker of the Mission in the early part of 1924 with a view to diffuse amongst the back-ward Khasi population the ideals of true Aryan culture and civilisation. For this purpose the Ashram took charge of the management of a free M. E. School in the Shella state and has been conducting it all along with state subsidy. We are glad to note that the Deputy Commissioner speaks of the school as a promising one. The School provides scope to all Khasi students irrespective of caste and creed for learning Bengali along with other subjects, without wounding their religious susceptibilities. The Ashram also is conducting a night School and is further making arrangements for extending its work amongst the hill people. We are glad to note that the charitable dispensary attached to the Ashram extended its medical help to over 3000 people. The Ashram stands in great need of funds to continue and expand its noble work. Contributions may be sent to—Swami Achyutananda, Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Shella, P.O. Lait Kynsew, Khasi Hills, Assam.

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# THE VEDANTA KESARI

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want  
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold  
The Upanishads and believe that 'I am the Atman.'"

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA,

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## PRAYER.

त्रयी सांख्यं योगः पञ्चपातिमङ्गं वैष्णवमिति  
प्रभिन्ने प्रस्थाने परमिदमहः पश्यमिति च।  
इचीनां वैचित्र्याद् मुकुटदलनानापथ कुषां  
नृणामेको गम्यस्त्वमसि पयसामर्णव इव॥  
नमो नेदित्राय प्रियद्व इवित्राय च नमो  
नमः क्षोदित्राय स्मरहर महित्राय च नमः।  
नमो वर्हित्राय त्रिनयन यवित्राय च नमो।  
नमः सर्वस्मै ते तदिदमनिसर्वाय च नमः॥

Of the several paths laid down in the three-fold Veda, Sankhya, Yoga, Shaiva and Vaishnava Scriptures, though some people take to one and some to another as the best, and though devotees follow these various paths, whether straight or crooked, according to the difference in their tendencies, yet, O Lord, Thou alone art the ultimate goal of all men as is the ocean of all rivers.

Salutations to Thee, O Lord, who art near and yet art far. Salutations to Thee, O Destroyer of animal passions, who art the smallest of the small and yet art the greatest of the great. Salutations to Thee, O Possessor of the highest wisdom, who art ancient and yet art ever youthful. Salutations to Thee, who art all things and yet art beyond all things.

MAHIMNA-STOTRAM.

# SPIRITUAL TALKS OF

Swami Brahmananda

(At the Belur Math )

**C**OMplete self-surrender to the Lord is not an easy matter. The mind always creates doubts and raises such questions as this—"I have neither seen nor known God. How is it possible for me to love and resign myself unto Him?" Indeed, the natural tendency of the mind is to drag one down to the things of the world from higher thoughts and ideals.

Once a certain person complained to Sri Ramakrishna—"Sir, I do not feel inclined to take the name of the Lord." "What is it then that draws your mind away?" asked Sri Ramakrishna. "It is my ram. I love it more than anything else," was the reply. "Very well," said Sri Ramakrishna, "when you feed and serve your ram, think that you are feeding and serving the Lord Himself. Do practise it sincerely for sometime, and then you will find everything all right."

The Guru shows the disciple the path to life eternal, and protects him from all troubles. Putting great faith in the words of the Guru let the disciple act up to them. He will then feel after sometime that the impurities of the mind are vanishing away and Divine Light is making its appearance within. There is no doubt that everything is achieved through faith in the perfect Guru. The disciple should look upon him as God incarnate on earth. Through constant thought and meditation on the Guru, the disciple is purified both in body and mind. And then the Guru appears before the disciple, and revealing the Ishtam (chosen ideal) to the latter, he passes out of sight. It is said in the salutations to the Guru—

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णु गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः।

गुरुरेव परं ब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः॥

"Guru is Brahma; Guru is Vishnu; Guru again is Shiva himself. Verily Guru is no other than the highest Brahman. Salutations unto Him."

If the disciple is endowed with a sincere faith in the preceptor, it is easy for him to attain Divine knowledge and devotion. Indeed, the one thing needful is faith in the Guru. When this is gained, everything is gained.

Realisation of God is impossible without the purification of the heart. Sri Ramakrishna used to say—"If the Guru is a perfect and realised soul, the ego of the disciple is destroyed in no time, as is the case with a frog seized by a big cobra. But on the other hand, if the Guru himself is unilluminated, then both he and his disciple have to suffer a great deal. Anyway the disciple is not able to get rid of his ego, or fetters that bind him to the world." It is not possible for unilluminated Guru to bring about the liberation of his disciple. How is it possible for an ordinary man to save another from the fetters of the world? The Lord alone, who is the author of this world-enchancing Maya, can free man from its meshes.

The knower of God alone can show the way to Salvation to another. But how can he, who has not realised God, has not received any commission from Him, has not been strengthened by the Divine strength, free a soul from the bonds of the world? If the blind leads the blind, both are sure to come to grief.

It is only after God-realisation that one gets the "inner vision." Then only can one truly understand the troubles of another, and give him the proper instruction. Indeed, if a person possesses a sincere yearning for the Lord and is eager to follow the spiritual path, he is sure to find a real Guru through the grace of the Lord. So a spiritual aspirant need not feel very much bothered about getting a Guru.

Those who come under the guidance of a realised Guru need not have any anxiety about their spiritual progress. They have been already put on the way. Now their task is only to follow it. If they meet with any trouble or make any mistake, the Lord is sure to protect them and show them the right course. Having sincere faith in the words of the Guru let them walk along the path shown by him ; that is enough.

What's this world like ? It is like a country hog-plum—containing only stone and skin, but no pulp. Besides it brings acidity and colic to one who eats it.

You are all pure, young souls. Your mind is now under your control, not being distracted by worldly thoughts. You can realise God easily, if you strive for it from now. You can fix your mind on God without much exertion so long you are young. But it will be difficult for you to do so after you grow older. It is a very hard job to bring the mind under control once it gets scattered. The Vaishnavas have this beautiful saying——

“ The Jiva has got the grace of *the three*—the Guru, the Lord and the devotees of the Lord. But without the grace of *the one* it has come to utter ruin.”——

The meaning is :—The disciple has received the grace of the Guru through the grace of God, he has also been imbued with noble ideals ; besides, he has got the company of holy men. Now what is wanted is the grace of *the one*, that is, of the mind. If the mind is favourable, everything is accomplished. The grace of the others can be felt only when the mind is free from restlessness. Now, some how or other, the mind is to be brought under control. Unless this is done, all strivings prove to be of no avail.

It is therefore that I warn you, my boys,—“ Beware ! your mind has not yet learned to wander. And before it does so, hold fast the reins. Just as the driver first

trains a huge elephant and then makes it do whatever he pleases, so also we have to train the mind in such a way that it may act according to our command. What we want is that it must not be our master. The only means to train the mind is to lead it to relinquish the desires for enjoyment. The moment this is done, it becomes your slave. It is therefore that the Bhagavad Gita and other scriptures speak of the glory of renunciation again and again.

What we want is renunciation. That is the only way. And they alone can realise the glory of renunciation whose mind has not been distracted by the things of the world. Sri.Ramakrishna used to say—"The parrot learns to repeat the words taught to it when it is young. When it grows up beyond a certain stage, it cannot learn anything. Then it can only cry,—‘caw, caw’.

Divine thoughts leave a deep mark on the tender mind. It is only in youth that one is able to appreciate and grasp the higher ideals of life. But with the advance of age, the mind is occupied with manifold things. It then becomes restless and always wants to wander. It loses its steadiness and power of sustained thinking. It is very difficult to make on it then a deep impression of anything.

How simple and strong is the faith of little boys! They believe what they hear from others and try to act accordingly. They attain success, to whatever thing they might apply their undistracted mind. But with the advance of age they tend to become sceptical. They come to doubt everything. At last they reach such a state that it becomes very hard for them to have faith in anything. Therefore I tell you—Do what you want to do *now*, when you are young.

We saw in the life of our Master that he used to speak of the life of renunciation particularly to young men and wanted to impress on their mind the idea that



God-realisation is the highest object of life. He knew that the young alone would be able to take up his ideal fully. Fortunately, you are all young and your mind is not tainted by worldly thoughts. Give up all desires and dedicate yourself solely to the Lord. You cannot have Divine bliss and worldly enjoyments at the same time. You cannot get the one without renouncing the other. Really you cannot give up the lower things unless you come to possess a taste for the higher.

This is the proper time when you should fill your mind with the thoughts of the Lord to the fullest extent. Make Him your own. "He is my all"—when this idea is firmly fixed in your mind, all your troubles will come to an end. And then none will be able to do any harm to you either here or hereafter.

Does he who takes the syrup of sugarcandy relish the syrup of molasses? Worldly joys lose their flavour when one gets a taste of the bliss divine. All objects of enjoyments appear to be not only insignificant but positively bitter in taste. What I say to you is this,—offer yourself heart and soul to the Lord and let Him do with you as He pleases.

## EDITORIAL NOTES

VIVEKANANDA—A MANY-SIDED PERSONALITY.

**S**WAMI Vivekananda is honoured as a great national hero throughout the length and breadth of the country. Some regard him as an inspired Hindu missionary who went to the far-off West to proclaim the glory of the Eternal Religion of India and thereby to raise his great motherland in the estimation of the occidental nations. Others adore him as a self-less social worker who wept for the misery of the poor and the distressed and inaugurated a great movement for their relief and elevation. Others again respect him as a

great patriot who loved his motherland—the queen of his adoration—with all the passion of his soul, and awakened in his beloved countrymen a new sense of national consciousness that is finding expression in self-abnegation and service. Some others admire him as an “orater by Divine right” who could charm his audience by his magnetic personality and transport them into a higher world of thought by the magic of his wonderful eloquence. There are other admirers who revere him as a great philosopher who by means of the mighty power of his intellect, his irrefutable reasoning and brilliant arguments succeeded in establishing the glory of the Vedanta as the rationale of all philosophies.

#### AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE LIVING PARADOX

Swami Vivekananda was thus a many-sided personality. And no wonder that to many he was a living paradox. He was a Hindu missionary, but he never cared for the usual forms of conversion that is current in the missionary world, and aimed, on the other hand, to bring about a spiritual conversion of the heart that tended to make Hindu a better Hindu, a Christian a better Christian, a Mussalman a better Mussalman. Again, he was a social worker but to him society was synonymous with humanity, and service meant worship of the God immanent in man. He was also a patriot of patriots, but was at the same time alive to the demands of higher humanity, and always stood for the exchange and assimilation of the highest ideals of the East and the West. He was a fascinating orater, but he was at the same time a perfect Yogi who could retire into the very depth of Silence and realise in the domain beyond thought and speech the ineffable glory of Brahman. Again, he was unquestionably a philosopher, but his philosophy was inseparable from his religion and had as its goal the intuitive experience of the One, the Free, the Knower, the Self, appearing as soul and nature. In

the direct vision of the Unity and Harmony behind the apparent diversity and discord, there lay the reconciliation of the apparently contradictory aspects of the Swami's unique personality. And it was this realisation of the Divine that made him boldly declare—"I have lost all wish for salvation. I never wanted earthly enjoyments.... To work for the good of humanity has been my motto all through life. Even if I die I shall still work for the salvation of India, for the salvation of mankind."

#### VIVEKANANDA—THE SAINT

The Swami was primarily a saint—a seer of God—and all the other phases of his nature were the expressions of his all-round sainthood born of his complete vision of the Truth. It is a great pity that in these days of conflict of ideas and ideals we have mostly lost our spiritual sense, and this is the main reason why we fail to appreciate the central theme of the Swami's life—the great theme of religion and spirituality, which has been in this holy land, as he repeatedly pointed out, "the keynote of the whole music of national life." His playing at meditation and losing himself in Divine Consciousness even in childhood, his spiritual hunger that greatly increased with his years, his bold question to his Master—"Sire, have you seen God?", his spiritual transformation at the Divine touch of Sri Ramakrishna, the terrible spiritual tempest that raged within his soul, the tremendous Sadhana he passed through at the command of his Guru, his realisation of the highest spiritual consciousness in the Nirvikalpa Samadhi, long before he came to be known to the world,—all these and other facts of the Swami's life clearly testify that he was a saint first, and everything else afterwards. He was undoubtedly the most glorious example of his saying—"First let us be Gods and then help others to be Gods."

## THE DIVINE POWER BEHIND THE SWAMI

As the Swami told his Master, he wanted to remain immersed in Samadhi night and day. That was the one object of his life, he said, during the earlier days of his discipleship. He had not yet realised the mission of his life. But the Master, who knew all about it, replied—"For shame, my boy! Does it befit you to speak like that! I thought you were like a huge banyan tree and would give shelter to thousands of weary souls. Instead of that you are seeking your own Mukti, your own salvation! Do not think of such small things, my boy! How can you be satisfied with such an one-sided ideal? My ideal is all-sidedness." Through the grace of the Guru, the disciple was blessed with the experience of the Supreme Beatitude. And after this the Master said—"Just as the treasure is locked up in a chest, so will this realisation of yours be kept under lock, and the key shall remain with me. When you have finished my work, the treasure-chest will be again unlocked; and you will know everything even as you have just now known." Later on, the Divine Power that worked through the personality that was called Sri Ramakrishna transferred itself into the personality of the disciple, and it was this that made the Swami work unceasingly for the fulfilment of the Mission inaugurated by his Master. Indeed, the life of the Master and that of his disciple cannot be separated. Like the silent clouds that gather storm and the thundering ones that spread it, the one represents mostly the static aspect and the other the dynamic aspect of the same Divine Power that is working for the regeneration of India and the world.

## VIVEKANANDA—THE PATRIOT.

Impelled by this mighty Power the Swami wandered all over India, as it were to find out the true mission of his life. And in the course of these long

years of travel from the Himalayas to Cape Camorin, he found the real soul of India, and came in living touch with the mighty stream of culture that is flowing with all its branches and tributaries, fertilising the life of the Indian people. He came to love India all the more on seeing her glory with his own eyes. He gave expression to this all consuming passion that swayed his soul when he wrote from the West—"India I loved before I came away; now the very dust of India has become holy; it is now the holy land, the place of pilgrimage, the Tirtha." Vivekananda—the patriot-saint of Modern India—loved the physical India with her snow-capped mountains and vast plains watered by mighty rivers, with her innumerable ethnic groups, and the infinite variety of her fauna and flora. But he loved her all the more as the land of religion and spirituality, the land of holy rivers, mountains and cities sanctified by countless prophets, saints and sages. To him the thought of his motherland was, as Sister Nivedita puts it, "like the air he breathed," and it was to her service and to the service of her children that he dedicated his life and soul as he himself said—"My life's allegiance is to this my Motherland, and if I had a thousand lives, every moment of the whole series would be consecrated to your service, my countrymen and friends."

#### THE SOLIDARITY OF THE INDIAN PEOPLE.

During his wandering life the Swami had the opportunity of coming in close contact with all classes of people—princes and peasants, high caste and low caste, literate and illiterate alike. His heart bled to see the miserable plight of India's teeming millions sunk in poverty and ignorance. And with great anguish of soul he wrote soon after his arrival in America—"The poor, the low, the sinner in India have no friends, no help; they cannot rise, try however

they may. They sink lower and lower every day, they feel the blows showered upon them by a cruel society, and they do not know whence the blow comes. They have forgotten that they too are men, and the result is slavery." Indeed, India cannot rise unless the masses would rise along with the classes. And therefore the Swami always wished—"Let New India arise out of the peasant's cottage, out of the huts of the fisherman, the cobbler and the sweeper. Let her spring from the grocer's shop, from beside the oven of the fritterseller. Let her emanate from the factory, from marts and from markets." He fully realised the solidarity of the Indian people, which consists of both the higher and lower classes, and wanted his countrymen always to bear this great fact in mind. He said—"Forget not—that the lower classes, the ignorant, the poor, the illiterate, the cobbler, the sweeper, are thy flesh and blood, thy brothers. Proudly proclaim—'I am an Indian,—every Indian is my brother'. Say—'The ignorant Indian, the poor and destitute Indian, the Brahman Indian, the Pariah Indian, is my brother'."

## AWAKENED INDIA

With the vision of a seer that he was, Swami Vivekananda saw the dawn of a new age in India. He found the unmistakable signs of a new awakening and was quite sure of the glorious future of his motherland, and the part she would be playing in the regeneration of the world. He declared in his prophetic way—"The longest night seems to be passing away, the sorest trouble seems to be coming to an end at last, the seeming corpse appears to be awaking.....Only the blind cannot see, or the perverted will not see, that she is awaking, this motherland of ours, from her deep long sleep.....None can resist her any more ; never is she going to sleep any more ; for the infinite giant is rising to her feet." What the Swami predicted three decades ago is proving to be

literally true to-day. The Indian people have awakened to a new sense of unity and collective consciousness even our communal quarrels, caste dissensions and creedal strifes, however deplorable they may be in themselves, are clear signs of this renaissance, and the consequent craving for a new order in society. It is a great thing that the awakening has come, and has brought with it new thoughts and activities. Now the chief task is to direct the minds and actions of men and women along right channels. And this can be done most effectively by making all follow the path of national service to be done in the spirit of worship to the Virat—the Cosmic Being—"with hands and feet everywhere, with eyes and heads and mouths everywhere, with ears everywhere in the Universe, That exists pervading all." With a heart overflowing with infinite compassion the Swami spoke of the ideal of spiritualised service. "Where should you go to seek for God, are not all the poor, the miserable, the weak, gods? Why not worship them first? Why go to dig a well on the shores of the Ganges? Let these people be your God—think of them, work for them, pray for them sincerely—the Lord will show you the way." This great legacy of loving service, that is meant for all the masses and classes, men and women, Indians and non-Indians, the Swami has left to his countrymen in general and followers in particular. May we be true to the trust that he has imposed on us, and follow in his foot-steps with unflagging zeal and devotion !

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## GOD WITHIN.

(By Swami Atulananda).

### III

The scriptures point out still another path that leads to freedom. This path is suggested by the verse of the Psalm that I have quoted at the beginning : " He that planteth the ear, shall he not hear ? He that formed the eye, shall he not see ? "

Let me quote alongside with this verse some passages from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad conveying the same meaning : " Thou canst not see the true seer of sight, nor hear the hearer of hearing, nor perceive the perceiver of perception. He is thyself who is within all. Unseen but seeing, unheard but hearing, unperceived but perceiving. There is no other seer but he, no other hearer but he, no other perceiver but he. This is thy self, the Ruler within, the Immortal. "

And from the Svetaswatara Upanishad : " Grasping without hands, hasting without feet, he sees without eyes, he hears without ears, he knows what is to be known, but no one knows him. That is the mighty Soul. "

And now one more quotation : " Through every eye he sees, through every ear he hears, through every mouth he tastes through every hand he touches, through every foot he moves. "

We have seen that the real man is consciousness in its pure state. That consciousness is the divine in man, the God within. Acting on the mind it expresses itself as will and desire, and reveals to us life as we know it. The mind is the instrument, and as the mind is, so we appear to be. That is our personality.

All our perceptions come through the senses and call up thoughts in our mind. And at the back of the mind the God within us witnesses everything, receives all the sense perceptions and thoughts that come through the mind. He is the Witness of all our thoughts and actions.

Whatever we see, that very vision is presented to the God within us. " He who planted the eyes, should he not see ? " Whatever we hear or taste or smell or touch or think reaches the God within us.

Our whole life is thus really an offering to God. We may offer Him a holy life or a wicked life, but we can never escape Him for He is our real Self. He is always awake, always the witness, our very Soul. If we look through lustful eyes we place



lust before God's holy vision. If we think evil thoughts, thoughts of jealousy, envy and hatred, we place before God jealousy, envy and hatred. If our life is pure, holy and upright we offer Him purity, holiness and uprightness. When we enter unholy places or unholy company we take God with us, for He is always with us, the nearest of the near.

Our whole life is an offering whether we know it or not; whether we make the offering consciously or unconsciously. Therefore a true understanding of life is so important. In our thoughtlessness we do many things which we would not allow ourselves to do were we aware of the fact that God receives all our deeds and thoughts. When we degrade ourselves we offend Him. And evil life is an insult to the God within us; it is an insult to our real Self. If we raise ourselves and aspire to what is good and holy, we honour the God within us, we honour our real Self.

A wicked life makes us miserable because we are then not true to our divine nature. A holy life brings wonderful peace and satisfaction because we are then trying to manifest our divine nature. An evil life is an unharmonious life, it is a struggle between our senses and our true nature; and this struggle is painful. But when we act from the impulse of goodness we establish harmony between our external life and the divine life within. This harmony brings satisfaction and makes us happy. Therefore the Rishis prayed: "may we see with our eyes what is holy and beautiful, may we hear with our ears what is right and good, may we keep our body and mind under control." Then, we please God, we live in harmony with our divine nature, and life becomes a joy, a pleasure, a life filled with cheerfulness and satisfaction. It becomes a pure and holy offering to the most High within us.

Such a life, in Christian scriptures, is called "Waiting on the Lord," or, "Living in the presence of God." All actions are then an offering to Him.

One who follows this path of self-realisation tries to be constantly aware of the God within him. He says with the Psalmist: "Thou knowest my down sitting and my uprising. Thou understandest my thoughts afar off, Thou art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but lo, oh Lord Thou knowest it altogether. Whither shall I go from Thy spirit or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven Thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art

there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea even there shall Thy hand lead me and Thy right hand shall hold me." (Ps. 139 : 2—10).

Then God has become a reality an ever-present friend and guide. Then man actually lives with God, talks with Him, listens to Him, is always conscious of Him. The devotee wants to please that dearest Friend within himself, he wants to offer Him all that is good and holy, a sanctified life.

Through such a pure, true life the intellect becomes purified and within the devotee develops a new power of perception, a power latent in every one, the power of intuition. Through intuition the contact and communion with God become more intimate and unobstructed. There is a constant flow of communication between the devotee and the Lord. The devotee speaks, and the voice from within answers. The devotee listens with the ear of faith, and the still, small voice whispers into his soul sweet communications to which the ordinary ear is deaf. It is a life of constant rejoicing, for the Beloved is always at hand. With Him the devotee eats and talks and walks and works. Everything is done in a conscious companionship with that dearest and nearest Friend. Closer and closer they draw together; the relationship becomes ever more intimate till at last perfect union is established and the lover and the Beloved are inseparably united.

Then the lover becomes the willing instrument of the Beloved, the harmony is established and the Lord works his divine will through the devotee who has gradually changed into a new being, a being filled and guided by God. Then man has reached the divine state, his own glory is established, the God in him is no longer hidden and obscure but has become the manifesting power. Pure consciousness then operates through a perfect instrument.

This is the highest manifestation of God on earth, man has become God-man. Through such a man we see God acting on this world-plane. When such a man speaks, he speaks as an oracle for he lives in God and God in him. His body has truly become the temple of God. His lower nature is dead ; God works through him.

This is the happiest, the most peaceful, the most blissful life, for, " Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love Him." Then the whole life is a life of prayer, prayer in the true sense. For prayer does not mean begging, it means opening up

the heart to receive the divine influx of the Beloved. Blessed is such a life, blessed beyond all compare. It is the life of the mystic who realizes that religion does not consist of forms and ceremonies but is a close relationship with God, a drawing closer to God through the medium of love.

Divine love implies loss of selfhood, a merging of the self in God. This is the living rock upon which true religion is based. Religion is a creed of love, love for God. This divine love is the well from which all other love is taken. In this love, which is God, the devotee wants to be absorbed. And this love is seated eternally within his own soul. The lower self merges and loses itself in the divine self, the lover loses himself in the Beloved, all taint of selfhood is gone. This is union with God, and this is the goal of all religions, the fulfilment of life.

The scriptures tell us that first we must become aware of the fact that God really dwells within us. Then we must through prayer and meditation draw close to Him, we must commune with Him, we must be always occupied with Him. "He who thinks of the Atman, he who is satisfied in the Atman, he who desires nothing beyond the Atman, he knows the Atman in truth." The Atman is most dear to him, and he is most dear to the Atman.

What others discuss about, the devotee experiences. He no longer theorises, he is and becomes. It was in such a state of divine union that a Bhakta declared ; " I am no more for He speaks with my tongue and I have vanished. Verily I have become Him, there is no God besides me." And a Sufi Saint has said : " I am God, so worship me, glory to me ! How great is my majesty !" And the Hindu Rishi, Vamadeva, realising his divine nature to be one with God, called out : " I am the moon, I am the sun. He who knows that he is Brahman, becomes all this "

But words like these befit only those who have realised the highest, those who have become perfect. For them the world has no more attraction. They live in eternity, indifferent towards and unaffected by their surroundings. Their minds are drawn inward and they are united with the God within.

The skilful musician can draw perfect music only from a perfect instrument. If the instrument is out of tune or defective the music will be imperfect. Each one of us is an instrument in the hands of God. God is the great musician, he plays on our hearts. Let us try then to be good instruments by living a pure and holy life. Then the music of God's love will play through us,

## THE DOCTRINE OF EXPERIENCE AS THE ONE SELF

By Prof. K. Sundararama Aiyar, M. A.

### VII. THE DEFINITION OF BRAHMAN FURTHER CONSIDERED.

THE great Indian teacher, Madhusudana Sarasvati, says:—"In the second Sutra of the Brahma-Mimamsa, under the pretext of pointing out the cause of the world, the distinction between *tatastha-lakshana* (temporary attribute) and *svarupa-lakshana* (the essential property) is made in order to establish the truth that the all-pervading Brahman and the living individual (Jiva) are capable of being related to each other in their mutual relation of being distinction-less (*abheda*). " This position has already been established in the previous section. Though the property (or function) of being the cause of the world is only a temporary, though none the less distinctive, property, it is brought forward so prominently in order to show that the living individual is not in essence distinct from the absolute Brahman which is the object of inquiry. For, the aim of the inquiry, as already shown, is that alone and none other. Before the inquiry is started, there prevails a state of ignorance—and even a false or perverted knowledge—in the human mind which hides the truth and thereby brings about the misery of the bondage and degradation in which man finds himself during his wanderings in the world of phenomena. The inquiry into the truth with the aid of the Upanishads is meant to remove this state of ignorance by establishing that both the inquirer's individuality and the absolute Existence are, in essence, one and the same.

We have already stated that, according to Chap II of the Taittiriya-Upanishad, the essential Nature (*Svarupa*) of Brahman is defined as *Satyam* (Existence), *Jnanam* (Self-Effulgence) and *Anantam* (the Bliss of Freedom from the limitations of place, time and circumstance). That this definition suits both the limited individuality of the living man as we know him and the unknown divine personality of the supreme God who creates and sustains the universe can be satisfactorily established by the following considerations (mentioned in the context of the Taittiriya Upanishad already referred to). Existence, Self Effulgence, and Bliss are all found in the Jiva of our experience and in God as we find him depicted in the Itihasas and Puranas—though they are *limited* in

the former owing to ignorance of the truth, and *unlimited* in the latter owing to his omniscience. In the case of the former the limitation will vanish when ignorance is replaced by the acquisition of Knowledge through the inquiry (*utchara*) into the ultimate purport of the Veda. Hence, the living individual (*Jiva*) and the supreme Person (God, *Isvara*) are, in nature and essence, one and the same (*abheda*).

To the above statement of doctrine, the *first* objection is that these three characteristics avowedly exist in different degrees in the Jiva and in God, and therefore, these two beings cannot have the identity (*abheda*) postulated in the Vedantic doctrine of Sankara. The answer is that in the case of God, the limitation is not one of essence, but only due to *Maya* or primordial matter in its totality, the root-cause of the world's manifestation—; and, in the case of the *Jiva*, too it is due to *Avidya*, which is but a fraction of the same, though varying in quantity and quality in different individuals so as to account for the differences we discern in the manifestations of personality, everywhere. The immeasurable perfection, omnipotence, and omniscience of the Divine Personality, equally with the measurable limitations of the Jivas as individuals, are recorded and accounted for in all the authoritative sources of Hinduism, including the highest of them all,—the Veda.

The *second* objection is that the doctrine assumes that *Maya* (primordial matter) is a *second* existence, in addition to Brahman. The answer to this is that (a) *Maya is not real*. The atman is the one reality. "Sat alone existed before creation: one only without a second" (Chandogya-Upanished). (b) Professor Eddington of Cambridge, recently declared his scientific doctrine of matter (as *Maya*) as follows: "The conception of substance which played so great a part in our familiar idea of the world and in our philosophy of matter, had become greatly reduced in its domain, and, in fact, *physics had found so little scope for substance that it had abolished the conception altogether*" (*The Hindu*, Feb. 17, p. 8). Neither Newton's "solid, hard, impenetrable, movable particles of various sizes and figures," nor the "primitive fluid" of Kelvin, nor "the simple atom or center of force" of Boscovich are now found acceptable as the true cause of the material world. As Dr. James Ward tells us:—"We must not call them fetishes, but they are assuredly fictions." As Professor Eddington now teaches us, matter as a substance stands "*abolished*." To the scientist of to-day as to the Sankarite Vedantin, matter is only phenomenal. That is,

we know it only as relative to our senses and mind. We know nothing of an underlying external reality or substance called matter. The Indian dualistic philosopher of to-day, to whatever school he belongs, has to abandon as unscientific his doctrine of three realities or substances (*tripadartha*). The one reality—the Atman—is undifferented; and also, it has no potencies (or *saktis*) enabling it to get into relations of any kind with any other object or form of existence. Being the "one existence only without a second" the Atman has to be, and is to be conceived as being, the *asraya* (basis, support) of Avidya or Maya, and also as its *Vishaya* (the object within its reach or sphere of operation). Thus, the Atman, being of the nature of *Janana* or *Praṇasa*, is enabled to endow avidya (or Maya) with certain powers or potencies (*Saktis*), fitted to produce the evolution of the universe. These *saktis* are two in number, viz. *avarana śakti* and *vikshepa śakti*,—the latter being a direct consequence of the former. By the *Avarana śakti*, it prevents the Atman from shining and being recognised by the Jiva (individual person) as *pratyak* in its nature i. e., as the innermost of all existences knowable by us. As a consequence of this failure in recognising the Atman truly as interior (*pratyak*) the living individual (*Jiva*) is perforce made to perceive certain appearances outside, and mistakes them for realities (even as he mistakes a mother-of-pearl for silver and thus gains his experiences of the phenomenal universe. Furthermore, the power or potency in Avidya becomes actualised only when the Karmic tendencies (*Vasanas*) of the Jiva become ripe and manifest themselves for the gaining of fresh experiences in the manifested world of phenomena. (c) *Maya* (avidya), however, is not *asat*, i. e., not a mere unreality—not a mere trick of language like the expression "the horn of a hare." For it is to be conceived as having the *saktis* (above mentioned) out of which the world of phenomena spring into manifestation.

Maya therefore, is the primeval material cause of the phenomenal universe, and it ceases only when the noumenal reality of the Innermost Self is realised by the methods of meditation long known and practised among the Indian Yogis and Gnanis. Even as our dream-experiences are only *apparent* but thought by us to be real while they last and are recognised as false in our waking state, so the phenomenal world of our waking state seems real while it lasts, but passes away and is no longer real when the realisation of the Atman as "one only without a second" is reached.

The *third* objection against the doctrine is that *Satyam*, *Jnanam* and *Anantam* are themselves *attributes* of Brahman, and so the doctrine that Brahman has no attributes is baseless. ..To this the reply is that they are not attributes, but only serve to *indicate* that the Atman is,—to use the language of Sankara, "*nitya—suddha,—buddha—mukta*" in its nature and essence. *Satya* means that the one Self is not capable of being destroyed or even affected by anything in the physical world or by mind. *Jnana* means that it is essentially self-effulgent, and not capable of being lighted up by anything else. *Ananta* means freedom from limitation in place, time or through relationship to objects in the world of phenomena, and hence it is of the essence of joy, for our experience of the world proves that limitation is productive of misery. As the Sruti says, "that which is unlimited (*bhuma*) is joy ; there is no joy in what is limited (*alpa*) "

The *fourth* objection to the doctrine has been recently stated as follows in a lecture (*vide the Hindu* of February 2nd) delivered by Prof. P. N. Srinivasacharya, of Madras. We shall mention *three* points therein. (I) "To Ramanuja Vedanta was an organic basis of Knowledge. Sankara, on the other hand, was monistic in his views. " (II) "Sat was the absolute, not the contentless, not the Nirgunabrahman ; Sat differentiates itself in the multiple world." (III) "The Four Pramanas mutually corrected one another. If the Veda is to be accepted in its totality, why say accept this and reject that? Metaphysics, morality, and religion must be allied. "Philosophy having to do with all these, the absolute of metaphysics could not be said to be but identical with the God of morality and religion."

We shall consider these objections in order. (I) The idea that the Vedanta reveals Brahman to us as "an organic basis of knowledge" is merely founded on the analogy of man's bodily organism. The Upanishad, as already shown, asserts only that "Sat alone existed before creation—one only without a second." The distinction in Brahman between a *deha* (body) and a *dehi* (the owner of the body) implies a duality or multiplicity for which there is no foundation in the Upanishads. An argument from analogy is of no validity where it is opposed to the express statements of the Sruti and the traditional interpretation (or *Sampradaya*.) handed down to us from the Rishis of antiquity. As Sankara says in his Gita-Bhashya:—"Even though a man knows all the various branches of Knowledge, we cannot accept him as a teacher (of

Vedanta) if his views are opposed to the Sampradaya." As the late eminent philosopher, Dr. James Ward also says:—"Analogy is an important aid" to description, though powerless to prove existence". Also, an eminent writer on Rhetoric, Campbell, says:— "Analogical evidence is at best but a feeble support and is ever hardly honoured with the name of proof." Further, in the present case, the analogy of an organism is not proven, as already stated—as it has no Vedic support. Our critic's defence is that Ramanuja "upheld the equal validity of all Pramanas." Nor does Sankara fail here. For he says:—"Each Pramana has its force in establishing the truths pertaining to its own sphere of usefulness." Perhaps what the critic refers to is the Vaishnava contention that the Vedas must be understood in the light thrown by the Pancharatra-Agama and the Vishnu and other Puranas recognised as alone Sattvika. But the Rishis have laid down that "wherever there is conflict between Sruti and Smriti, Sruti is superior in validity." Jaimini, in especial, has laid down: "Wherever there is conflict, the Smriti pronouncements have no validity," and should not be accepted. Besides, Vyasa has clearly stated that the Smritis including Itihasas, Puranas, &c. are only meant as a popular exposition for the benefit of the "inferior brahmins" (*brahma-bandhus*) and others of the Kali age who are unfit to grasp the Vedic teaching as interpreted and upheld by the immemorial Monistic tradition running straight down from the first teacher who is Narayana himself. Hence, it is impossible to maintain "the equal validity of all Pramanas." Hence, also, we must maintain that, when the critic says that "the Vedanta is the organic basis of knowledge," we must understand that the doctrine is only intended for those who cannot grasp, or put into practice, the higher "monistic" doctrine as taught in the Sampradaya which Sankara upholds for the world's benefit. This more acceptable and defensible view has been taught in a lecture on "The Life and Teachings of Madhvacharya" recently delivered in Bangalore (and reported in *The Hindu* of Feb. 14, 1927) by a famous scholar and Vedantin, Mr. Karpur Srinivasa Rau:—"The Uttara-Mimamsa school was represented by the Great Sankara. He taught to the world the nature of the Supreme Paramatman, the nature of the Jivatman, and the correlative relationship of the two by the famous teaching, 'That Thou art.' The lecturer said that he and he alone could be an Advaitin who has realised the Brahman in all objects and in himself. The highest conception was found to be incomprehensible to the later generations



of men, and hence the advent of Sri Ramanuja who preached that the Parabrahman was to be contemplated and adored through his personal qualifications, &c."—(II). The critic entirely misunderstands the philosophical meaning of the word, '*Absolute*'. The word does not mean "contentless," as the critic thinks. Let us refer even to such a common source of information as Chambers' Twentieth Century Dictionary. It says:—"(phil.) Existing in and by itself without necessary relation to any other being; capable of being conceived of as unconditioned. 'In the sense of being finished, perfect, it may be considered as opposed to the Infinite; but in the sense of freed from restriction or condition, it is evident that the Infinite itself must be absolute. Opposite schools differ on the question whether the absolute can be known under conditions of consciousness.'" According to Sankara,—who bases himself on the Brahma-Valli of the Taittiriya-Upanishad—the essential nature of the Absolute (Brahman) is *Gnana*,—i.e., Self-Effulgence (*Svaprasāsa*), Knowledge, Experience, Consciousness *in itself*,—not that which is known "under conditions of consciousness." The Taittiriya-Upanishad distinctly says of the Brahman,—“From which language recoils (without being able to describe it), and which the mind also cannot know.” Our critic says: “Brahman was knowable, realisable.” Sankara, following the Upanishad, says that Brahman is Knowledge, Experience, Consciousness,—one and absolute and unconditioned,—and, therefore, *not* “Knowable” *as an object*,—for it is the Innermost Self of all and, as, such, has not the “objectivity” that our critic postulates regarding it. Further, our critic goes on to say:—“Ramanuja accepted that the Veda was revelatory in character. If the intention of an individual was objective, it could be elevated to the rank of truths propounded by the Vedas. This was Ramanuja’s test of truth.” Intuition is thus clearly *different* from the Veda as an accepted source of truth—and thus we are helped to confirm the Advaitin’s old claim and contention that Sankara alone bases his doctrine on the eternal rock of the Veda. Dr. Thibaut, too, admits that “the Vedānta of Gaudapada and Sankara would in that case mark a strictly orthodox reaction against all combination of Non-Vedic elements of belief and doctrine with the teaching of the Upanishads.” (III) Sankara accepts the validity of all *Pramanas*, and we have already quoted his statement that “each *Pramana* has its force in establishing the truths pertaining to its own sphere of operation.” He maintains that the Veda alone is

Pramana for all knowledge which is supersensuous, and hence also for the one absolute existence which is the Innermost Bliss of the Self beyond all the phenomenal and conditioned manifestations of the Universe. In the Taittiriya Upanishad it is pointed out (I) that Brahman is the Innermost Self (Chap. II); and (2) that Bhrigu realises it as such with the aid of his Guru (Ch. III). As Sankara also says in his *Svatma-Nirupana*: — 'Sruti has for its purport only that which has value' (*prayojana*). Now *Sabda* (or Sruti) and *Artha* are inseparably and eternally connected; and hence the former always reveals, as it must, the latter. Wherever it fails to reveal the truth, it is only owing to the mind's prepossession or ignorance acting as an obstacle and a screen to such revelation. The object of *Vichara* or inquiry into the purport of the Veda is to remove the obstacle so that the words and sentences of the Veda may fulfil their function of revealing what is real and true.

It is the ignorance of the one self which has caused the bondage (*bandha*) of man in his Samsaric course in the world of phenomena. The Gita has repeatedly pointed out that *bandha* consists in (a) *sangha* (the egotistic attachment of the individual self to action as its agent) and (b) *phalabhisandhi* (the desire to reap the fruits of activity; and also that release (*Mukti*) consists in not thinking, 'I am the doer' and 'I am reaping the fruits of my activity' (XVIII, 7, and 17). When the knowledge of the truth is gained, and ignorance is dispelled, through the Veda, the bondage of samsara is made to vanish, and the one innermost Bliss of the Self shines in all its glorious self-effulgence,—and this is the highest of all values, the *summit of all values*.

Lastly, a brief word has to be said in reference to the notion, prevailing in some quarters that Ramanuja alone has founded his doctrine on the views of a Rishi,—viz., Bodhayana. The author of the "*Sruta-Prakasika*" (the commentary on "*Sri-bhashya*") says:—"Only a Rishi can understand a Rishi's view—all other people have unenlightened understandings". Even if we accept this dictum, which is questionable and unauthoritative, we find that the author of the "*Brahma-Vidya-bharana*" has clearly shown that Sankara's Monistic interpretation of Vyasa is supported by Parasara. For instance, let us take the present topic of the definition of Brahman, as given in Chaps II and III of Taittiriya Upanishad and treated by Vyasa in his Sutra 2 (chap. I). Parasara, in his Vishnu Purana, gives the

following interpretation :-- "That which is of the nature of Existence only (Satta-Matra), which is totally free from all differentiation or limitation (*bheda*), which cannot be truly comprehended even through the words (of the Veda), and which shines by its own self-effulgence (*atma-samvedya*), - that knowledge is known by the name of Brahman."

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AS A NATION BUILDER\*

*By N. R. Kedari Rao, M. A., L. T.*

I feel greatly honoured to have been called upon by the authorities of the Ramakrishna Mission to deliver the usual address on an occasion like this when we have all met to celebrate the birthday of Swami Vivekananda, who is by common consent the greatest Patriot-Saint of Modern India. While I was conscious of my inability to do anything like justice to this subject, I took advantage of this opportunity to re-read the life of Swamiji so faithfully rendered by his Eastern and Western Disciples in the semi-centenary edition and to understand his Teachings as far as my poor brains can comprehend them. The fact is that Swamiji's works have already become classics like Plato and Aristotle, Homer and Virgil, Kalidas and Kambar, Shakespeare and Milton which can be read with pleasure in youth, with profit in middle age and benefit in advancing years ; the lectures and writings of the Swami have their own appeal to man in the different stages of his evolution from boyhood to old age. The more we read them with care, the more we feel the full import of their significance. At one time they appeal to us for their religious fervour ; at another time for the depth of philosophical truth embedded in them ; once for their patriotic glow and again for the passion of serving his fellow-men, which the Swami had to the last day of his life.

The best way of understanding the wonderful influence he exercised during his time and is still continuing to exercise on India now is to regard him as the man who spoke with authority and not as a scribe. This authority he derived in a large measure from his Master, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

In one of the best known Slokas of the Bhagavad Gita the Lord Sri Krishna says to Arjuna:—

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\* Lecture delivered on the sixty-fifth birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda celebrated on the 30th January, 1927 at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras,

"Whenever virtue fades and vice is predominant, then I reincarnate myself into this world in order to establish the Dharma on a firm and secure basis."

It is in accordance with this that we are familiar with the ten Avatars of Mahavishnu—Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha Rama, Parasurama, Krishna, and others—the most notable of them being Rama and Krishna in whom He manifested himself as the 'Warrior Kings.' In order however to suit himself to the modern spirit of the 19th Century, He came to us as a Sanyasin and a religious man in the form of the Paramahansa. After long years of Tapasya and meditation on the banks of the Holy Ganges in the Temple of Dakshineswar, he was able to realise God and desired to spread broadcast his message to the people at large. So he wanted a powerful mouthpiece and this was vouchsafed to him in his illustrious disciple Swami Vivekananda whose life and teachings we are met here to contemplate this afternoon.

The important facts of the Swami's life can easily be summarised. Born in the year 1863 in the lordly house of the Duttas, his original name was Norendra Nath Dutta. The Duttas were famous for their peity and reverence to God. Norendra's own grandfather Durgacharan had become a Sanyasin, renouncing his all to serve the Lord and the picturesque story is told of how in his wanderings he went over to Benares the ecclesiastical centre of Hinduism and spent his last days in that Holy City before he joined the Lord in the Final Illumination.

It was therefore in the blood of the family, this spirit of renunciation and service to fellowmen. So, it is no wonder that when Noren came of age and had the brightest prospects before him as a lawyer his mind was strongly attracted towards the Man of God who dwelt at Dakshineswar and that he gave up all ideas of becoming a wealthy man of the world in order to take upon himself the greater task of rejuvenating Hinduism and spreading the gospel of Vedanta in distant Europe and America.

For the sake of convenience, we may review his life in three or four distinct stages, the one of course leading naturally to the next.

First we have the period of his boyhood and early youth; then the period of his discipleship under the master; later his wanderings as an unknown monk throughout the length and breadth of India; and lastly the period of his renown after his famous address in the Parliament of Religions,

Little need be said with reference to his early life except that like many others who later on became famous, he was a precocious youth and showed unmistakable signs of greatness even in his school and college days. His power of concentration and his inquisitive tendency marked him out as unique among his school-mates, and he naturally took his place as their leader in all the fun and frolic they arranged among themselves. To the last he retained this buoyancy of spirits and it is well that he did so because it was the only means of relaxation to his otherwise over-wrought nerves, busy as he always was with strenuous intellectual and spiritual works.

In his 16th or 17th year he first came to know of Sri Ramakrishna and very soon their acquaintance ripened into intimacy; in a few months he began to feel the Master's influence in such an unmistakable way that he successfully resisted all his father's attempts at getting him married; and formed the quiet determination of becoming a Sanyasin. There were many obstacles in the way and they had all to be patiently overcome. His father's death was a serious blow to the whole family which was at once plunged from a life of opulence and luxury to one of poverty and misery. But as soon as things became better, and the family had just enough of income for a bare maintenance, Norendra took up the monastic life, dedicating himself to the cause of God and his country.

The period of five years (1881-1886) is very important in his life, because we see him being trained for his future work by the Master. As Carlyle says 'If you want to command, learn to obey first.' Similarly, if you want to preach religious truths to others, first realise God in your life; for it is then and then only that others will believe you. Mere 'intellectual conviction will not do; for what you grasp intellectually may be overthrown by a fresh argument: but what you realise is yours for ever.

During this stage then, we see the Swami practising the severest austerities merging himself into meditation and learning devoutly and reverently the truths of the Spiritual World at the feet of his Master. How perfect this training was, may be seen from the following instance:—

The Nirvikalpa Samadhi is a state where the soul is in perfect unison with God; this stage can be attained only as the highest fruit of Yogic practice; and Swami Vivekananda was anxious to experience it. After several years of struggle, the Master allowed him to have it once at the garden of Cossipore; but at the same

time, he knew that it is rarely that the soul comes back to this body if it attains that condition. The Master knew that the disciple had to carry on his work. So he said to him, "Just as the treasure is locked up in the box, so will this realisation you have just had, be kept under lock, and the key remains with me. Now you have work to do. When you have finished my work, the treasure-box will be again unlocked." And as it actually happened Swami Vivekananda never experienced this bliss except once or twice in all his life.

When the Master knew that the disciple had learnt all that he had to learn, he was prepared to leave this body as a worn out garment and join the God-head in Universal Bliss. So, just three or four days before it, he called for Norendra and by touching his heart communicated to him all his powers and said, "Now I have become really a Fakir. I have given away all the fruits of my meditation to you and I am sure you will turn them to good use." After this he renounced his body knowing that all would be well with his chosen band of disciples, because Norendra was at their head.

From 1886 to 1892 or 1893 we get glimpses of Swami Vivekananda's life as an unknown monk, wandering all over the land, studying its customs and manners and acquainting himself with the varied problems of modern India in the sphere of social equality, the uplift of the masses, the need for proper education and the pressing necessity for feeding and clothing the poor and the destitute.

If his five years of close touch with the Paramahansa formed the period of his spiritual training, his wanderings now gave him an insight into the real needs of India, and trained his capacity for observation and reflection. Many are the tales of suffering told of him in this time; often he had to starve for days together and on occasions even water to drink could not be had.

On one occasion while he was travelling in Rajaputana the heat was tremendous and Swamiji was dying of thirst. There was not a drop of water to drink and with his parched throat, the Swami was keeping quiet, murmuring to himself however, 'This also is the Will of the Mother.' Then a certain unknown person came to him with eatables and an earthen jug full of delightfully cool water and asked him to partake of the refreshments. The Swamiji said "I think you are mistaken, my friend; I don't know whom

you have come in search of." The man said in all humility, "It is you, Swamiji, that I want. The Lord has sent me to serve you. Just an hour ago while I was sleeping, I dreamt a dream in which I saw Sri Rama pointing you out to me telling me that He was pained to see you starving. Accordingly, Swamiji, I ran here, and there is no mistake about it that you are the person I want."

On another occasion, while climbing up the Himalayas, he became weary and footsore and lay down in the roadside quite tired and hungry. There was a Muhammedan passing by, who gave him a cucumber and thus saved him from almost the jaws of death.

It is these struggles that account for his ever-present love and sympathy for the poor and the down-trodden. "I am poor : and I love the poor," he used to say, "My goal consists in serving the poor of all races."

When his wanderings from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin were practically over, he came to Madras in 1893 and it was here that his intention of going to Chicago to represent Hinduism at the Parliament of Religions first took a definite shape.

Arrangements were made and subscriptions were collected for this purpose and at last in May 1893 the Swami set sail for America from Bombay.

The next glimpse we catch of him is at the Parliament of Religions electrifying the whole audience with his magnetic personality and his profound thoughts on the Vedanta. The very first speech he made, addressing his audience as "Sisters and Brothers of America" sent a wave of enthusiasm among those present and they repeatedly applauded his speech. He had, as it were, carved out a name for himself in a day and was universally recognised as the hero of the hour.

Any other man would have lost his head over the unique success that attended him in the Parliament; but Swami Vivekananda knew better than that; he was determined to follow up his success by preaching to the people in various cities in America and holding private classes to those who were eager to follow the great truths of the Vedanta. He stayed there for nearly three years together and laid the foundations of his future Vedanta work.

The period of the Swami's world-wide fame lasted only for a brief spell of nine years ; for he left this body on the 4th of July 1902; and yet during these days the work he did was more than what another would have done in a whole century. His travels in England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy and other parts of Europe, his triumphal march from Colombo to Almora, his plans for founding the Sri Ramakrishna Math on a broad basis (giving as it were a new meaning and purpose to the old ashrama of the Sanyasin); his zeal in founding the Sri Ramakrishna Mission, a body composed of both monastic and lay members, his enthusiasm for relieving the poor and the distressed, all these results of his life-work are well-known and need not be dilated upon at any great length.

Swami Vivekananda was a many-sided genius. Some may speak of him as a mystic whose soul was always concentrated in super-mundane things; or as a philosopher who tried to find out the common points amongst all the great religions of the world ; others may think him as the arch-apostle of Hinduism to the Western world ; or as a great teacher and leader of his own people in India. Still others may love him as a rare combination of a Gnani and a Bhakta rolled together in one; but personally I like to regard him as one of the greatest Nation-Builders that India has produced. He knew perfectly well that India's strong point was spirituality, and if India is to progress, her appeal to the world must be mainly to things of the spirit, rather than those of the matter. So it was that he became a patriot and a saint in one.

He knew that every nation has a particular theme to work out in life; a principal note round which every other note centres to form the harmony. In one case it is political power as in England; in another it is military glory, as in ancient Rome ; in a third it is the artistic tendency ; in a fourth it is physical powers and so on. In India the keynote to the whole national life is religion, and if the nation is to progress and reform itself, it must be through the medium of religion. That is why he first of all set his mind to re-interpret the principles of the Vedanta in the light of modern needs and then to uplift India by making the Vedantic principles applicable in everyday life.

In the first task he was gloriously successful. For he was able to formulate the principles of a Universal religion whose background is the Vedanta but whose details will have to be modified according to the culture, the customs and manners, the traditions



and the beliefs of the people among whom it is to flourish. He appreciated the points of note in every religion and therefore served the cause of Religion with a capital R and not this or that particular religion. How catholic his views were may be seen from his admiration not only of the Upanishadic saints and the Vedic seers of his own country, but of Muhammad the Prophet, of the Lord Buddha, of Jesus Christ the Son of God, of Guru Nanak the founder of the Sikhs as a sect, as also of Zoroaster and Chaitanya. "Toleration for all" was his watchword in thus harmonising the various religions; and it was but natural then that he had scores of Western disciples who were ever ready to give up everything for his sake and that he had a Muhammadan disciple who called himself Muhammadananda because he was ready to claim the Swami as his spiritual guide. This cosmopolitan view which he primarily got from his Master, was strengthened by his world wide travels and his keen observation of the religious beliefs prevalent in different countries. Comparing Hinduism and Christianity he once said. 'The blessed sacrament is only an elaboration of the Vedic Prasada; the priestly tonsure corresponds to the shaven head of the Indian monk; the rituals of Roman Catholicism have their counterparts in Hindu rituals with their lights and incense and music. Even the sign of the cross as I have seen it practised is equivalent to our touching the various parts of the body in our Sandhya. I cannot therefore believe that Christianity is at all an alien religion. "It is this breadth of view that prompted him to plan the "Temple Universal" where men of every caste, creed, nationality or religion should be at liberty to worship God, each in his own way; and where the principles taught should be easy, simple, popular, true and yet capable of meeting the requirements of the highest minds. It is a pity that such a noble ideal was not carried out owing to his premature passing away from this world.

While thus the Swami displayed remarkable powers of classifying religious ideas and said with all his strength and fearlessness that all religions were true in a very real sense, though they are not true in so far as they drew lines of demarcation and exclusiveness, inside the sphere of Hinduism itself he re-stated the eclectic principles of the Vedanta so as to reconcile the three great systems of philosophy,—Dwaita, Visishtadwaita and Adwaita. He said that religion always has three steps—The first is Dualism in which the individual soul is different from the Universal Soul; then it is partial non-dualism, where the two are connected together by

love and devotion and yet are different in order to realise this very love and devotion for the other; at last it is monism where the individual soul merges in the Universal Soul in complete Bliss and Harmony. So, he said, the three systems do not contradict one another; on the other hand they fulfil one another and supplement each the other's needs.

This was the greatest service he rendered to Hinduism in that he has put an end to all quarrels as to which system is superior or inferior to another. In this connection we may clear another misconception about his teachings which is often prevalent. It is said in some quarters that he has started his own cult and creed. As a matter of fact he has done nothing of the kind. He has organised no new sect nor propounded any new cult; of that we have had enough and more than enough. His greatness lies firstly in harmonising the different cults and creeds; secondly in expounding and interpreting the Eternal Principles of the Vedanta so as to suit modern needs and requirements; and above all in directing the religious fervour of the people in the channels of useful social service. To put it clearer, the ideal of the Indian saint hitherto was, "Renunciation and Mukti." He was prepared to renounce his all and wander alone in the forest in order to realise God and therefore attain Salvation or Mukti for his own soul. In such a scheme of things there was no place for the householder. The Swami therefore enunciated the new formula of Renunciation and Service to mankind for his disciples and followers. Many a time has he said to them—"What have I to do with Mukti or Salvation for my own soul when I find that hundreds and thousands of my brethren are suffering in this world? Let us realise God by serving our fellow-men. I am prepared to take birth over and over again in this world—and even to go to hell if necessary—if thereby I can help a few of my fellow-beings." In fact this compassion for suffering humanity he displayed in such an abundant measure that he might well be called another Lord Buddha.

As a practical Vedantin then, he loved India with all his heart. India is the mother of religions; India is the cradle of civilisations; India is the fountain head of spirituality. And therefore he became an enthusiastic student of the culture of his country and a lover of all its glories. He was rightly proud of India's past and hoped for a future more glorious than her past. He loved India for her broad rivers, and spreading forests and mighty mountains which have all become integral elements of the culture of her people. He brought

the eye of a poet and the imagination of a prophet for interpreting her important customs and manners—such as eating food with the right hand, because it is used for worship and Japam; the reverence which children are taught to show their parents as visible gods on earth; the temple that every Indian house is, because of the worship of God carried on in it day after day; and the reverence for great men like Akbar and Asoka, Sivaji and Shah Jehan, Buddha and Sankaracharya and so on. He used to say that behind the apparent diversity of castes and creeds there was a fundamental cultural unity prevailing throughout India. The Siva of Amarnath is the same as the Pasupathinath of Nepal and that again is the same as the Siva of Rameswaram. Further, India is one in her love of pilgrimage, her reverence for the Vedas, her regard for classical, especially Sanskrit learning and in the fundamentals of social customs and manners. It is the duty then of every true Indian to know the greatness of his land, to realise its potentialities and to make himself useful in its cause. He was so filled with this love that he once exclaimed, "The very dust of India is holy to me. The very air is holy to me. It is the holy land; the place of pilgrimage, the Punyabhumi." And on another occasion he said to those about him, "Be proud of the fact that you are an Indian. Don't hang down your head. Don't apologise to any one. You have nothing to excuse yourself for."

But this burning zeal for the land of his birth did not prevent him from understanding the problems that we have to confront in Modern India. Foremost among them he placed the uplift of the masses, who have been starving both mentally and physically for centuries together. He was impressed with the magnitude of the problem when he said, "There are two hundred millions of men and women in India, sunk in poverty and ignorance. Let us therefore go about from door to door, giving them food and clothing, and bringing the light of learning to their darkened minds." So much indeed did he feel for them that he thought it absurd to talk of religion to the Indian masses without trying to remove their terrible poverty and their sufferings. He therefore consecrated his life to the service of the Indian masses—especially the outcaste Narayanas, the starving Narayanas and the oppressed Narayanas. For in all of them he recognised the presence of the Lord and spoke of them as 'My God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races.' In fact his object in founding the new order of Sanyasins is that every one of them should be prepared to sacrifice his own life

for the sake of others, to alleviate the misery of the millions rending the air with their cries, to wipe away the tears from the eyes of the widow and the orphan; to provide the ignorant and the depressed classes with the ways and means for the struggle for existence, and then only to teach religion according to their needs. That the Swamiji was able to realise this Ideal may be seen from one or two instances. In 1898 when plague was virulent in Calcutta the Swami was drafting a manifesto in Bengali and Hindi. When one of the Gurubhais asked him, 'Swamiji, where will the funds come from?' he said with sudden fierceness of decision. 'Why, we shall sell the newly bought Math grounds if necessary. We are Sanyasins, we must be ready to sleep under the trees and live on daily Bhiksha as before. What, should we care for the Math and for possessions when by disposing of them we can relieve thousands of people suffering before our eyes?' Aye, he was ready to dispose of the monastery itself for the good of the people.

We are glad to see that this spirit of service has permeated the minds of the Sanyasins of the Mission. We in South India are aware of the splendid help they rendered during the disastrous floods of 1924 in the Cauvery and other rivers. And so long as this spirit is kept alive, there is no doubt that the Mission has a glorious future before it.

But to return to our point. The most important item then in the regeneration of India is the uplift of the masses. Yet he wanted that this should be done without injuring their religion, without making them lose their spiritual nature. If social reform has not hitherto been much of a success, it is due to the fact that the reformers have mostly tried to Anglicise everything and to throw overboard the whole cargo of the race's experience without a thought or a reflection as to its consequences. In her attitude to the West, India must maintain her own individuality. She will never find her destiny by becoming a third rate imitation of Europe. For the sake of her material welfare she must no doubt learn the sciences from the West, but in this process she must not lose her individuality at all. This warning was all the more necessary because the Swamiji wanted to stem the invasion of foreign culture in India and to make the Indians realise their own worth.

If then the Indian masses are to be uplifted in this spirit and if the Indian is to preserve an attitude of dignity and

equality with the other nations of the world, his education must teach him manliness, strength, courage and fearlessness. These qualities are best taught in and through our Upanishads and that is why the Swamiji regarded them as the source of manliness and of man-making education. Our ideal is to turn out men with character, not mere milk-sops or dandies. Strength and manliness, this is what is wanted in India—Our young men are to be physically strong, mentally alert and spiritually true.

And this brings out another characteristic in the Swami. In spite of his love for Indians, he did not fail to recognise their shortcomings and pointed these out to them without any hesitation. Referring to the faults of the Indians he said in a private conversation, "Devoid of self-respect, you are full of jealousy among yourselves. So you have made yourselves objects of contempt to foreigners. Throw aside your vain bragging; reflect on the doings of your daily life; build up a good physique and then you are sure to succeed in all your undertakings." In this respect his admiration for the Englishmen knew no bounds. In a private letter he wrote to his friends he says—"Of course, you know the steadiness of the English. They are the least jealous of each other of all the races; and that is why they dominate the world. They have solved the secret of obedience without slavish cringing; they combine in themselves great freedom with great law-abidingness."

With the object then of doing selfless service to his fellow-men without any thought of reward, the Swamiji founded the Sri Ramakrishna Math and the Mission and charged them with the following duties. They (i. e., the members of the Brotherhood) are to feed the hungry and clothe the naked; in his own fiery words:—"For one who is ill and has no one to look after him, for him you will have to get medicine and diet and nurse him. One who has nothing to eat you will have to feed him; one who is ignorant you will have to teach him; in short my advice is you have to serve others as best as you can and then only will you have peace of mind." And this they have to do renouncing Kamini and Kanchana, in the name of one who came to the world for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many. In a very real sense then they are the true servants of India, for in them has been eradicated all caste consciousness—as the Sanyasins don't recognise any caste or creed among themselves; and all provincial consciousness, because it is superseded by the racial and ethnological unity of India as a

whole. The Ramakrishna Mission and the monks belonging to the order of Ramakrishna are two of his great bequests to India for her uplift and regeneration.

Not only this; but in his interpretation of Indian History the Swamiji was unique as a scholar. He recognised the four great streams of culture that go to form the grand heritage of India—Vedic or Aryan, Buddhistic, Muhammadan and European. And he was never tired of saying that every one of these had its strong points. He loved to say that India was one in its reverence for the Vedas and the Upanishads and the regard with which it held the Lord Buddha. And Sri Krishna he regarded as one of the earliest nation-makers in India because he brought to the Durbar of King Yudhishtira all the princes of the land to pay their allegiance to the paramount throne of Indraprastha. Among Moguls, he thought of Akbar as being gifted with the capacity for unifying India by bringing the Moslems and the Hindus together in love and friendship. Of Shah Jehan his admiration knew no bounds—and he spoke of the Taj Mahal at Agra not merely as a dream in marble but as a Sakuntala in marble—so high was his appreciation of Art. He was struck with the magnificence of the Moguls to such an extent as to say "The Moguls designed like Titans but finished like jewellers." Todar Mall and Tansen as well as Mira Bai fired his imagination and he was very generous in the praise he lavished on them.

Turning to Maharashtra he said to one of his disciples, "Study the life of Sivaji and you find him a great nation-builder. He is certainly not the mere marauder that he is represented to be." And warming up into the subject he continued, "Let us have a true Indian History, written by Indians in order to awaken the national spirit." Though it is now twenty-five years since the Swami passed away the task has not been completed in spite of the pioneer work undertaken by Sarkar and Banerjea, Parasnis and Dalal, Dr. Krishnaswamy Iyengar and Mr. K. V. Rangaswamy Iyengar.

Similarly turning to the South he regarded the Maharashtra Saints Ramadoss, Tukaram, Namdev, Ekanath as great bhaktas; in which category he included the Alwars and the Nayanars also. He thought of them all as contributing each in his own measure to the fundamental Unity of India. But we who have witnessed the remarkable influence of the Swamiji can go a step further and say that his memory itself is a common factor among all the Provinces in our country. Bengal acclaims him as the province of his birth

Madras is proud of him as having discovered his genius first and sent him on to Chicago to win his laurels ; while, Mysore, Hyderabad, Bombay, the United Provinces, the Punjab etc are all having sweet recollection of him as a wandering monk who thrilled the people with his brilliant wit and his profound thoughts on matters spiritual. So it is no exaggeration to say that from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, from Bombay to distant Assam his memory is gratefully cherished and his birthday celebrated with great enthusiasm. Whatever then her provincial differences may be, the whole of India is at one in doing honour to this great soul who is one of her priceless possessions.

All greatness is in essence the same. Had he not come into contact with Sri Ramakrishna he might have become a great statesman or a flourishing lawyer ; a wellknown orator or a devoted social reformer. But whatever field of work he might have chosen, he was sure to make his mark in it ; because he was gifted with the intellect of a Sankara, the fearless outspokenness of a Savonarola, and the willingness to serve others in times of need so characteristic of Florence Nightingale.

Blessed with such a keen intellect and with such transparent sincerity of purpose, he devoted all his gifts for the building up of an Indian nationality ; and who can say that he has not done his task well ? By making the Western world recognise the supreme value of the spiritual treasures of India and thus have a new respect for her ; and by making India herself conscious of her high destiny and the worthy part she must play in the world, he has done a great service to India as a nation. Again is it not a remarkable fact that very soon after his death an attempt was made by another great son of India to spiritualise politics. If Swami Vivekananda wanted saints to become patriots and servants of India as well, Gokhale strove for the ideal of politicians becoming saintly in their character. And see how the two processes are fulfilling one another. And out of a combination of these two movements, we are having the greatest Man of the world, I am referring of course to Mahatma Gandhi who is a patriot par excellence and as householder-saint par excellence. There is no doubt then that like Gandhi and Gokhale and Tilak, Swami Vivekananda's name will be handed down to generations, yet unborn as one of the foremost to build the edifice of modern India on firm and well-laid foundations.

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# BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF Swami Vivekananda.

The sixty-fifth birthday of the Swami was celebrated with great devotion and enthusiasm at innumerable places both in India and abroad. The *tithi* which fell this year on Tuesday the 25th January was observed with special Puja, Bhajan and offerings. At most of the centres the public celebration took place on Sunday the 30th January. Bhajana, the feeding of the Poor-Narayanas, religious discourses, lectures on the life and teachings of the Swami and distribution of Prasad formed the main items of the programme. Devotees joined the celebration without any distinctions of caste, creed, race or nationality.

## AT BELUR

Both the Tithipuja and public celebration were conducted at the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Maths and Mission on the 25th January. Special worship was conducted with elaborate ceremonies by the monks of the order. About four thousand Poor-Narayanas and devotees were sumptuously fed on the occasion, six young Brahmacharins took the vows of Sannyasa, dedicating themselves completely to the life of renunciation and service.

## MADRAS

On the morning of the 25th January—the Tithipuja day—the boys of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home assembled in the spacious hall of the Sri Ramakrishna Math, and chanted passages from the Vedas and Upanishads. On the 30th January more than two thousand Poor Narayanas were served with food. A number of Bhajan parties joined the celebration and sang devotional songs, filling the atmosphere with great religious fervour. In the afternoon there was a Harikatha in Tamil. Mr. P. Manikyaswami Mudaliar, B.A., spoke in Tamil and Mr. N. R. Kedari Rao, M.A., L.T., in English on the life and mission of the illustrious Swami.

## BANGALORE CITY

The Tithipuja was celebrated on the 25th January at the Ramakrishna Ashram, Basavangudi. On the 30th January Bhajan parties went in procession through the important streets of the city carrying the portraits of Swami Vivekananda in gaily decorated cars. Nearly one thousand poor people were fed in the noon. The evening proceedings began with a Harikatha. This was followed by lectures—one in Kanarese and another in English by Sriman Bellavi Narasimha Sastriar and Mr. Devarao Shilearam respectively.

## BOMBAY

The presence of Srimat Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj, President of the Ramakrishna Order and Mission, at the Ramakrishna



Ashram, Khar, added special grace to the celebration. On the 30th January morning Deccanese, Madrassee and Bengalee Bhajan parties sang devotional songs. About three hundred Poor Narayanas were served with food. On the 6th February a public meeting was held in the city at the Marwadi Vidyalaya Hall with Mr. K. Natarajan in the chair. Mr. N. N. Gupta, ex-editor of the Tribune of Lahore, and a fellow-student of Swami Vivekananda, read an interesting paper narrating his reminiscences. Swami Sharvananda also spoke on the message of the great Swami.

#### MYSORE

Special Puja and Bhajan were conducted by the students of the local Sri Ramakrishna Ashram on the morning of the 25th January. The annual meeting of the Vivekananda Rover Troop was held the same evening Mr. A. Vasudeva Row, Asst. Organizing Scout Commissioner, who presided on the occasion, addressed the gathering on the ideal of service. Swami Siddheswarananda, who is in charge of the Ashrama, also spoke on the message of Swami Vivekananda.

#### OOTACAMUND

The Tithi was duly observed at the Ramakrishna Ashram at Bishopsdown. The public celebration began with Bhajan on the 30th January. Swami Chidbhavananda addressed the audience in Tamil and Mr. K. G. Nambyar, Asst. Curator, Government Horticultural Garden, in English on the life and message of the great Swami.

#### PAINA

The birthday was celebrated under the auspices of the local Ramakrishna Ashram at the premises of Babu Tripura Charan Palit. Sports by the Vivekananda Boys' Association were held on the 12th February and prizes were awarded to the successful competitors. Next day about 3000 Daridra Narayanas were given a sumptuous feast. Swami Srivasananda spoke on the life and teachings of the Swami at a public meeting presided over by Sriji Mathuranath Singha.

#### POONA

The birthday was observed by the Vivekananda Society on the 25th January at the Sardar Moodaliar Club, Raste's Peth. A public meeting was held at 6 p. m. with Mr. L. R. Gokhale in the chair. Prof Damle of the Fergusson College delivered an instructive lecture on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.

#### AT OTHER PLACES

The anniversary was also celebrated by the Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashram, Benares; Sri Ramakrishna Math, Dacca; Sri Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Kankhal; Sri Ramakrishna

Math, Allahabad Sri Ramakrishna Math, Baliati ; Sri Ramakrishna Sadhan Mandir, Chandpur ; Sri Ramakrishna Mission Society, Rangoon ; Sri Ramakrishna Yogananda Ashrama, Allepy ; Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Jaffna ; Vivekananda Society, Colombo ; Sri Ramakrishna Math, Kuala Lumpur, and by innumerable other Maths, Ashramas and Societies in India, Burma, Ceylon, Federated Malay States, United States of America and other countries. We are sorry it is not possible for us to publish all the reports that have been received.

## NEWS & REPORTS.

### SRIMAT SWAMI SHIVANANDAJI AT NAGPUR.

After nearly two months' stay at the Bombay Ashrama, His Holiness Srmat Shivanandaji Maharaj President of the Ramakrishna Order and Mission, left Bombay on Monday the 14th February. On the way he halted at Nagpur where he stayed at the local Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama for nearly a week. Many people of the locality came to pay their respects to the revered Swamiji and were much benefitted by his spiritual talks. His Holiness returned to Belur on the 22nd February after nearly ten months' absence in southern and western India.

### A NEW ASHRAMA AT RAJKOT.

The opening ceremony of the new Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama at Rajkot was celebrated with due éclat and solemnity on 5th March—the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna. The morning programme consisted of special Puja and Homam which was attended by several distinguished gentlemen of the locality as well as by H. H. the Maharaja Saheb of Morvi, who has been kind enough to lend his old Utaro at the Civil Station for the location of the Ashrama at present. The State Musician of Rajkot entertained the gathering with a few select Hindi Bhajans.

In the evening a public meeting was held in the Ashrama grounds with the Maharaja Saheb of Morvi in the chair. About three hundred gentlemen and several ladies were present. The inaugural speech was made by the Maharaja Saheb. Among other things he mentioned that Sri Ramakrishna and the Mission founded in his name typified 'Shiva and Seva' and he hoped that the centre started at Rajkot would gradually spread its benign influence all over Kathiawar and be a source of inspiration to many. Swami Madhavanada President of the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas, who was present at Rajkot in connection with the opening of the centre, spoke feelingly on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, laying special stress on the ideal of the acceptance and toleration of all faiths as exemplified in the life of the Great Master. Mr. P. M. Patel, Dewan of Morvi State, Mr. P. G. Musurekar, Bar-at-law and Mr. Prabhuram Shankarji Shastri also spoke on the occasion dealing with different aspects of the life of Sri Ramakrishna and the humanitarian activities of the mission.

With a vote of thanks to the chair by Mr. C. M. Shroff, Dewan Rajkot State, the meeting came to a close.

Swami Vividishananda ex-editor of the Prabuddha Bharata, will be in charge of the centre. For the present, the work of the Ashrama will consist mainly of giving class talks and occasional lectures to the local gentry and Students. The Thakore Saheb of Rajkot deserves special mention for his kind help and active interest in the work of the centre.

#### VIVEKANANDA SOCIETY, POONA

Consequent to the visit of Srimat Swami Sarvananda and his stirring lectures at the local Colleges during the month of December last, a committee was formed with 25 members to organise a society in this historic city. The formal opening ceremony of the new society was performed with great enthusiasm on Tuesday the 25th January—the birthday of Srimat Swami Vivekananda, in whose name the society has been started. The object of the society is to study religion and philosophy in the light thrown by the life and teaching of the great Swamiji.

#### The Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Calcutta.

The Annual Report shows a marked progress made by the Home during the year 1926. The Home is intended specially for students who cannot prosecute their higher education for want of means. The inmates are given ample opportunities for cultivating habits of self-reliance and self-culture. A religious class is held on alternate day as a supplement to the university education. There is also a small library for the use of the students. The Home provides accommodation for a limited number of paying students. At the end of the year under review there were 25 students—14 free, 4 half-free, and 7 paying.

The receipts for the general fund during the year under review including last year's balance of Rs. 4889-0-9, amounted to Rs. 11508-7-9, and the total disbursements to Rs. 6728-6-0. The balance in hand on the last day of the year was Rs. 4780-1-9. The students' Home is situated in a rented house and is in urgent need of a building of its own to accommodate one hundred students. It also proposes to expand its scope and impart to the students a training in Agriculture, Dairy-farming and other useful home industries in addition to usual academic training. For this purpose, the Advisory Board of the Home proposes to purchase a big plot of land in the suburbs of the city and construct a building there. The Board fervently appeals to the generous public for help.

Contributions may be sent to (i) Swami Shivanandaji, President Ramakrishna Mission, Po. Belur-Math, Dt Howrah or (ii) Swami Saradananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, Udbodhan Office, Mukherjee Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta; or (iii) Swami Nirvedananandaji, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, 7 Halder Lane, Calcutta,

# THE VEDANTA KESARI

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want  
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold  
The Upanishads and believe that 'I am the Atman,'"

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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## PRAYER.

ओं नमो भगवते तस्मै यत एतच्चिदात्मकम् ।  
पुरुषायादिबीजाय परेशायाभिधीमहि ॥  
यस्मिन्निदं यतश्चेदं येनदं य इदं स्वयम् ।  
योऽस्मान् परस्माच्च परस्तं प्रपद्ये स्वयंभुवम् ॥  
तस्मै नमः परेशाय ब्रह्मणेऽनन्तशक्तये ।  
अरूपायैरूपाय नम आञ्जयैकमणे ॥

Om! We offer our salutations to the Lord Who endows all beings with consciousness. We meditate on Him—the great Being Who is the origin of the universe, and is the Supreme Lord.

I take refuge into the self-created Being in Whom the universe rests, from Whom it has sprung, by Whom it has been brought into being, Who Himself constitutes it and Who at the same time is distinct from both cause and effect.

Salutations unto the Highest Lord, unto Brahman, unto Him of infinite power, Who is without any form and yet is with countless forms, unto Him Who does wonderful deeds.

SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM,

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# SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

*(At the Belur Math.)*

**R**EGARDING spiritual practices, the same rule will not be applicable to all. We must know the peculiar tendencies of each individual before any spiritual instruction can be given for his guidance. If the instruction goes against the particular bent of one's nature, not only will it do one no good but may even give rise to harmful consequences. It is, therefore, very essential that the Guru should study closely the individual tendencies and peculiarities of his disciples, and give instructions in such a form as will readily appeal to the temperaments in question. In this matter, beyond one or two general rules, no individual can be told in the presence of others what particular path he should follow. I have seen in the case of Sri Ramakrishna how he would take each individual disciple alone and give him in private the special instructions necessary for him. If you want to ask your Guru anything regarding your Sadhana you must do so in private. In a general way, the observance of these few rules will be beneficial to all spiritual aspirants. In the first place, you must have a firm faith in God. You must be fully convinced that if you realise God and obtain His grace, all the problems of your life will be solved; you will gain the object for which you have taken this birth; and on getting a taste of the Eternal Bliss you will become immortal.

Next comes Brahmacharya. Without strict Brahmacharya, it is not possible for any one to hold fast to grand ideals. To secure the full development and vitality of the body, brain and mind, Brahmacharya is

essential. Those who observe strict Brahmacharya develop a strong memory and a wonderful capacity for understanding and retaining anything. By reason of Brahmacharya, a special nerve is formed which brings about these wonderful powers. Do you know why our great teachers have laid so much emphasis upon Brahmacharya? It is because they knew that if a man fails in this respect, everything is lost. The strict Brahmacharin does not lose his vitality. He may not look like a *Palwan* (a great athlete) but the development of his brain is so fine that his capacity for grasping supersensuous things is remarkable.

There are certain rules which a Brahmacharin must observe. He must avoid exciting food, over-sleep, over-exercise, laziness, bad company and evil talk. If you indulge in idle talk your brain gets excited, you cannot control your thought, and you suffer from sleeplessness and other troubles.

The control of the palate is also essential. Otherwise you will be subjected to many troubles. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "Keep your *Bhudi* (stomach) and *Mudi* (brain) cool." It means you can do effective work, if both your head and stomach remain calm and cool. The glutton who has no control over his palate brings down ruin on his body and mind. When he gets nice dishes, he eats without restraint and feels restless with writhing pain. He spends all his energy in digesting the food, or gets some illness or other through indigestion and suffers. Eating too much of such things as garlic, onion and chilli excites the system to a great extent, and one finds it extremely hard to control the mind. I believe that those who want to lead a spiritual life, should pay special attention to what they eat and drink. It is desirable to take only nutritious and easily digestible food. There is no good in overloading the stomach,

No hard and fast rule can be laid down regarding food. With some, fish and meat might agree very well, while to others they may do harm. So every individual must find out from his own experience, what food agrees with him and what not.

We should eat food only in order that our body may remain fit and that we may be able to realise our true nature. The Sastras declare— शरीरमायम् बहु धर्मसाधनम्— (Health is the *sine quo non* of Dharma). This teaching does not mean that one should think of his body day and night. It implies instead that one should see that the vitality of the body remains unimpaired. One should eat healthy food avoiding those that excite or produce lethargy.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "You may eat as much as you like in the day, but you must eat only sparingly in the night." The idea is that if you take only a little food at night, your body will remain light and you can easily concentrate your mind. Otherwise you will have a tendency to sleep much or be lazy. Would you sleep away the night or spend the time in meditation? Daytime has its many distractions and so is not suited for meditation, but at night all creatures go to rest and nature herself is calm and silent. This is the time for aspirants to meditate on the Lord. In the depth of the night, the mind gets easily concentrated.

Spiritual practices should not be done in public or for show. If you do so it will be harmful to you. People will mock at you, they will offer you advice gratis and give you conflicting suggestions as a result of which various doubts will arise in your mind and your spiritual progress will be obstructed. The ideal Sadhaka behaves thus,—he goes to bed in the night with the mosquito curtain drawn down. Everybody thinks that he is sleeping, but as a matter of fact he spends the whole night in meditation lying quietly on his bed.

While you are young, you must try hard and get a taste of the Divine bliss. When once you have got this taste, you can never forsake your Sadhana. Even at the risk of your life, you will continue your spiritual practices. Those who are troubled with too much of sleep in the night, will do well to sleep in the day with a view to devote the night for meditation. The best time for meditation is dawn, eventide and midnight. Very often people waste this time in useless ways.

Sri Ramakrishna never used to spend the night in sleep, nor would he allow the young devotees who stayed with him to sleep long. When others had gone to bed he would wake up his disciples, give them definite instructions and direct them to the Panchavati, the Mother's Temple or Shiva's Temple for meditation. They would spend the whole night in Sadhana as directed, and take rest in the day. It was in this way that Sri Ramakrishna used to take them through various forms of spiritual exercises. He used also to say, "Three classes of people keep awake in the night—the Yogis, the Bhogis (seekers of enjoyments) and the Rogis (sick persons). You are all Yogis. You should by no means sleep away the night."

## EDITORIAL NOTES

### THE MISSION OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

Sri Ramakrishna was born at a most psychological hour in the history of the Indian people. The system of University education cleverly devised by British imperialists were undermining the faith of the literate classes in the spiritual civilisation of the land, and was producing a type of cultural hybrids anglicised in their life and thought. Indeed, the hypnotic influence of Western culture created a superstitious veneration for the West in the minds of the educated men of the country.



And many among them naturally came to think that the only way to India's salvation lay in inoculating the entire population with the lymph of foreign culture. They wanted to follow Western manners and customs, creeds and institutions to the utter neglect of their own. Hinduism became the object of derision to these "imitation Englishmen." Besides, the reform movements that arose within the bounds of Hinduism itself, failed to catch the Universal spirit of the Eternal Religion. They took up certain forms of worship and codes of conduct from Hinduism, and denounced all those that did not appeal to them. They no doubt exerted some wholesome influence on their countrymen, but having taken up an aggressive and even offensive form of propaganda, they alienated themselves from the sympathy of the main bulk of their co-religionists, and thus created more discord than harmony in the land. Then again there were the Christian missionaries, whose teachings were unsettling the minds of the young men, particularly of those studying in Christian schools and colleges. These foreign propagandists, whose knowledge of things Indian was usually just enough to misunderstand them, were carrying on a vigorous campaign of misrepresentation of the faith of the Hindu "heathens", which was supposed to possess neither ethics nor religion. Hinduism was thus the object of onslaught both from within and without. The mind of the younger generation was passing through a great conflict of ideals. At such an hour of trial came, Sri Ramakrishna to uphold the glory of the faith of his ancestors and to prove by his life and teachings that Hinduism stands for the highest ethics, religion and philosophy, nay, it breathes a universality which one may seek but can never find in any other faith.

THE HINDUISM OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

Sri Ramakrishna stands as the spirit incarnate of the Sanatana Dharma. As he himself said, unlike

a creedal religion that goes on harping on a single monotonous note, Hinduism plays innumerable tunes which combine to form a grand melody enchanting the hearts of those who are able to hear it and understand its meaning. And he actually demonstrated in his life the great fact that from the so-called idol worship up to the meditation on the Formless Brahman there are innumerable steps in Hinduism, which are meant for taking the sincere devotee to the very presence of the Divine. In short Sri Ramakrishna's religion was synthetic Hinduism that accepts all and rejects none. To quote the words of the Rev. Protap Chandra Mazumdar, "It is orthodox Hinduism, but Hinduism of a strange type. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa is the worshipper of no particular Hindu god. He is not a Shaiva, he is not a Shakta, he is not a Vaishnava, he is not a Vedantist. Yet he is *all these*. He worships Shiva, he worships Kali, he worships Rama, he worships Krishna and is a confirmed advocate of Vedantic doctrines. He is an idolater, yet he is a faithful and most devoted meditator of the perfections of the one formless infinite Deity whom he terms Akhanda Sachchidananda (Indivisible Existence-Knowledge-Bliss)." Indeed, Sri Ramakrishna was a devotee of a strange type. The ordinary religious man takes up a particular aspect of the Divine, realises it in his own life and speaks of it alone to those who seek his spiritual aid. But this "mad priest of Dakshineswar" followed innumerable religious paths at different periods of his life, and "saw" God in his manifold aspects, and declared with all the authority of a seer that He is both with form and without form and is personal and impersonal, immanent and transcendent at the same time. It was a unique phenomenon in the domain of religion that Sri Ramakrishna embodied in a single life the collective realisations of the world's sages and saints. No wonder that his religion was all-comprehensive and

universal in its tone. And this has ever been the true spirit of Hinduism proclaimed by the innumerable saints and sages, prophets and philosophers of India.

#### LIFE OF DIVINE EXPERIENCE.

To Sri Ramakrishna religion never meant book-learning or belief in dogmas, but spiritual transformation and mystical experience of the Truth. Even as a boy he refused to have anything to do with "a mere bread winning education." "What shall I do," he said, "with his secular learning which will not help me to see God or transcend the miseries of life?" This decision of Sri Ramakrishna gave a definite turn to the future course of his life. For twelve long years he flung himself heart and soul into tremendous spiritual practices and emerged out of them a fully illumined man to whom God was more real than the empirical world which is the only reality to most of us. In the memorable words of Mahatma Gandhi, "The story of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa's life is a story of religion in practice. His life enables us to see God face to face. No one can read the story of his life without being convinced that God alone is real and that all else is an illusion. His sayings are not those of a mere learned man but they are pages from the Book of Life. They are the revelations of his own experiences." Sri Ramakrishna remained illiterate in the worldly sense of the term, but through his arduous spiritual strivings he became at the same time the enviable possessor of the highest Divine knowledge that illuminated not only his own heart but also the hearts of the innumerable devotees who later on sat at his feet for spiritual light.

#### CONQUEST OF GREED AND LUST.

Sri Ramakrishna's life was the embodiment of the highest ethical virtues. But still he has not been spared by the unscrupulous propagandists of alien faiths. By

picking out one or two of his stray sayings, they have tried to show that he possessed no moral code! But in spite of this old trick of sectaries trading in religion, innumerable men and women have come and are still coming to recognise him as a super-human moral character that is unique in many respects in the entire religious history of the world. Sri Ramakrishna conquered the flesh completely and could never look on woman as an object of carnal love. Instead, he regarded her as the living image of the Divine Mother of the universe and never swerved from the ideal of motherhood even in dream. Complete freedom from the love of money was another great trait of his spotless life. Never could he think of possessing wealth of any kind. The very sight of money filled his soul with a strange dread and its touch brought to him excruciating pain; so very sensitive he became towards the objects he wanted to avoid. In this age of debasing Mammon worship and sex apotheosis he practised the most extreme forms of renunciation of "greed and lust," and thereby pointed out to the modern world that man is born not to be a money-making machine nor to lead the life of an animal in human form revelling exclusively in the enjoyments of the senses. He clearly showed that the goal of human life is to attain to Divine realisation, and love every being as the embodiment of Narayana who, as the scripture declares, dwells in every being and is the "World-Soul pervading everything that is seen or is heard in the universe." Only such a doctrine of Divine knowledge and love can completely put an end to the hatred and bitterness that is swaying the hearts of the warring communities in India and elsewhere.

#### THE EVIL OF COMMUNALISM.

A terrible wave of communalism is passing over the length and breadth of India. Bigotry and fanaticism are straining the relation between the Hindu and the Mussal-

man communities to the utmost, and are committing a great havoc in this land proverbial for its religious harmony and toleration. Appeal to nationalism is producing but little effect in the minds of the communalists who are ever ready to fight in the name of religion whatever it may mean. One may cry in despair with Swift—"We have enough religion to hate one another but not enough to love one another." No wonder that some of the patriots of the land would even suggest the banishment of religion from the life of the people. But fortunately or unfortunately the religious sense of the Indian population is too strong to be subordinated to other ideals, and hence the only practicable course is to sublimate the religious feelings of the people along with the ennobling of their love for the country and their countrymen. And in this, the most important task is to remove the huge mass of ignorance and misunderstanding that exists in the minds of many, and to lay bare before all, the ideal of mystic consciousness on which the saints and sages of all religions fully agree.

#### FELLOWSHIP OF FAITHS.

Sri Ramakrishna's life serves as a beacon-light to illumine the dark path along which our communal life is moving at present. Without depending on reasonings and arguments for the support of his faith, he went to the very core of religion, and perceived with his unfailing intuitive vision the common goal of all the spiritual paths in Hinduism. Nay, by means of his unique spiritual practices he also attained to the mystical consciousness of the Sufi and the Christian saints, and with it the underlying harmony of all religions. "One cannot honestly say," observes Miss Evelyn Underhill, "that there is any wide difference between the Brahmin, the Sufi or the Christian mystics at the best." What the writer speaks of from intellectual study, Sri Ramakrishna realised through the experiences of his life. The ulti-

mate solution of our communal problem lies in the recognition of the great truths realised by this God-man who in the words of Mr. William Digby, "knowing naught of what we term 'learning,' spoke as no other man of his age spoke, and revealed God to weary mortals." The time has come when the unscrupulous political self-seeker should no further be allowed to dabble in religion and call up the worst passions of men in its holy name. And no longer should mere book-learned theologians, who attach greater importance to the letter than to the spirit, be allowed to misinterpret the tenets of religion, and thereby unsettle the minds of men and women who unwittingly put their implicit faith in them. Let those alone who know God speak to us of religion. And such men always speak in the same strain as they receive their inspiration from the one infinite Source. What we urgently need is to strive our best to be spiritual and attain to the Truth for ourselves. And when we do that we shall realise as the Master has said—"The unilluminated man in his ignorance says that his religion is the only true one and that it is the best. But when his heart is illuminated with the light of true knowledge, he knows that above all these wars of sects and creeds presides the One, indivisible, eternal, all-knowing Bliss. It is invoked by some as God, by some as Allah, by some as Hari and by others as Brahman." Like all other mystics, ancient and modern, Sri Ramakrishna speaks to us of the eternal presence of the Divine—the common goal of all religions. And in the memorable words of Prof. Max Muller, "This constant sense of the presence of God is indeed the common ground on which we may hope that in time not too distant, the great temple of the future will be erected, in which Hindus and non-Hindus may join hands and hearts in worshipping the same Supreme Spirit—Who is not far from every one of us, for in Him we live and move and have our being." The message of harmony as realised by Sri Ramakrishna is

the sure remedy for curing the disease of communalism. Further, in it lies the possibility of unity not only between communities and communities but also between nations and nations. It is now for the manifold communities in India to make this message their own, attain to their national solidarity and thus lay the foundations of a world-brotherhood that can only be cemented by the fellowship of faiths.

## THE TEACHINGS OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA \*

*By P. A. Subramania Ayyar, B.A., L.T.*

On this day dedicated to the memory of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna which fortunately happens to be also the Janma-nakshatra (birthday) of his Ishta Deva (family deity) Sri Rama, and at this hour and amidst these surroundings so conducive to devout contemplation, my prayer is that the few words which I propose to speak, may be so winged with power as to strike deep into your hearts and intensify the longing that, I know, is already there for a nearer approach to God. For the one lesson on which the Master laid greater stress than on any other was that every one should long to see God. "Look into yourselves and see," said he, "is your longing for God as great and as deep as it is to see your children when they are away? Or, imagine that there is a thief in one room, and that in another room separated from him by only a thin wall there is a rich treasure; do you think he will get sleep in the night? Unless your longing to see God is as earnest as that of the fond father and as wakeful as that of the thief, you cannot hope to see Him. Blessed indeed is the man to whom this longing comes. To some it comes quite naturally; others who are no Fortune's favourites and whom perhaps an unkind world mercilessly tosses about long to know if in God they may find a haven of peace; in others again a chance word or a passing remark lights up the latent fire and sets up a steady glow. Whatever that may be, once the longing is there, it grows by what it feeds on and by degrees it so informs his being that wherever he may be and whatever he may be doing, his inmost thoughts will always turn to God.

\* Lecture delivered on the 92nd birthday celebration of Sri Ramakrishna held at the Ramakrishna Math, Madras on Sunday, the 13th March, 1927.

To those to whom the longing has not come, the Master would say, "Retire into solitude for a brief while every day and pray; and whenever opportunities offer themselves, seek *Satsanga* (holy company). Soon you will be set on the road to God." The fact is that the longing, if sincere, earnest and deep, sets up unknown forces in the realm of our unconscious being, so that even without our being aware of it, they gradually effect such changes in our conscious being that evil habits drop off one by one, the tendencies to thought and action get purer and purer, until in the end it becomes absolutely impossible for us to think anything but the right thought, to do anything but the right deed. And this change, be it noted again, is unconscious. The Bhakta will explain it by saying that by his sincere longing he has surrendered himself to God and that thenceforward God Himself guides him and so he can neither think nor do ill. The philosopher will explain it by saying that the individual by purging himself of what is low, ignoble or mean has opened the windows of his soul through which the Light of Truth flashes upon his being, and with such Light as his guide, he can no more sin in thought or in deed. He has put himself in harmony with the universe, his thoughts have been brought into parallelism with the celestial currents, and in his case, 'goodness and being are one.'

Sri Ramakrishna himself is a standing testimony to this great truth. He was quite an illiterate person, had absolutely no pretensions to knowledge or wisdom, had not had at first any training in religious practices of any kind. But even as a boy he had frequented the company of sadhus who met in the rest-house adjoining his native village, and under their influence the latent fire of Bhakti had been set a-glow in his being. And as if to complete what was begun there, he went to Dakshineswar. Being possessed by an overpowering desire to realise the existence and presence of his Mother, the Goddess Kali, he would cry out, "Oh mother, show me the Truth. Art Thou there? Dost Thou exist? Why then should I be left in ignorance? Why can I not realise? Truth, Truth alone do I want to realise. Truth I would touch, Truth I seek to feel." His prayers were so earnest and so heart-moving, that, it is said, as he cried, crowds of people gathered round him, wept as he wept and blessed him and wished him success with their whole hearts. This went on for twelve long years and in the end he succeeded in his quest and saw and realised God. "I see Him even as I see you in this room," used he to say to his disciples now and then.



And having seen God and the Truths of the Universe directly with his own eyes, what need had he to read books or acquaint himself with the methods of the dialectician or the philosopher? He saw and spoke quite naturally and what he saw and spoke were the eternal verities found expressed in abstruse and sometimes in ununderstandable language in our philosophical and religious works. Oh, the beauty of it! The homely language employed, the simple but wonderfully striking and impressive analogies that he constantly used to bring home truths, the bright play of fancy, fun and humour observable everywhere distinctly mark out his utterances and induce the conviction that they are unique.

Speaking of himself the Master used to say, "Do you fear because he is not a Pandit (book-learned)? No, No. He never falls short of the Wisdom of Life. He has a never-failing supply of Divine wisdom—truths directly revealed—which rise superior to the wisdom taught by the books."

The truth underlying this is explained thus: In each one of us is the Atman which partakes of the nature of God or the Universal Soul. But the Atman is coated over with such a thick layer of ignorance and passion and prejudice that it is like a dull mirror encrusted with mud incapable of reflecting the Divine light that falls on it. When the longing for God seizes the Atman or the individual soul, it acts as a solvent, and as the thick crust gradually wears off, the mirror of the Atman dimly reflects the light that falls on it, and if, by God's grace, the encrustation is wholly removed, the mirror of the Atman shines polished and bright, and whatever is reflected on it is the Divine Light of God; and whatever proceeds therefore from the Antahkarana (mind) of that individual is the Wisdom of God. He is the true seer, a Jeevanmukta (liberated soul) and ever has his being in Bliss.

Such a seer was Sri Ramakrishna himself, and because in his own case the path of Bhakti led on to realisation and because subsequent to realisation he found from actual experience that the other paths of Jnana and Yoga were more difficult to follow, he was never tired of repeating over and over again that in the Kali Yuga "Communion by prayer, devotion and love will enable us to see God with much less difficulty than by any other kind of communion and hence the practice of Narada's Bhakti Yoga has been enjoined as better adapted to this age than Karma Yoga or Jnana Yoga?" In his own inimitable way, the Master says, "Be like the kitten

rather than like the young monkey. This clings to its mother with its own effort when she moves about, but that goes on mewling till the mother comes and holds it by the neck. The young monkey sometimes misses its hold on its mother and is badly hurt. But the kitten runs no risk, for the mother herself carries it from place to place. So surrender yourself entirely to God. '

Another much-needed lesson in this distraught age which the Paramahansa taught was that enshrined in the Bhagavad-Gita. It is this—"In whatever form people worship Me, in that form will I present Myself unto them and grant them salvat on." And this he taught not as by way of expounding what is contained in a holy book but with the authority born of personal realisation. At various stages in his life, the Master underwent in himself the religious experiences of the devout followers of Christianity and Islam and found that the paths of these religions also led to the same goal as Hinduism.

The Master knew, of course, that the great majority of people in the world are too engrossed in their daily avocations to afford any time for the pursuit of spiritual aims and *they* need more of help and guidance than others. To them he prescribes some forms of useful discipline :

In the first place, he would have them retire into solitude for a brief while every day and pray intensely for light.

Secondly, he enjoins on them the duty of gradually releasing themselves from the bondage of wealth and women. This bondage he regarded as the greatest obstacle to spiritual advance and it should be the householder's endeavour gradually to wean himself away from it. The expression Kamini-Kanchana was often on the lips of Sri Ramakrishna, and he exhorted his disciples to guard themselves against them. He himself had undergone such a rigorous course of discipline that the mere touch of coin sent a shiver through his body and the sight of women moved him to prostrate himself at their feet. But the Master knew that such discipline was not for the ordinary householder. He knew too that even if he attempted it, he would fail, and that, as was the case with Ravana, though he might succeed in curbing his passions for a while, those very passions would in the end overpower him. So the Master said to him, "Turn the course of your passions towards God. You must love. Love God then with all the intensity you are capable of. You give way to anger now and then. Be angry with all those who are obstacles in the way of your Spiritual pro-

gress. If you must be proud, be proud like Vibhishana who said, "This head that bowed before Sri Rama will not bow before any one else." "Again," said the Master, "your love of God may take various forms. It may be either *Shanta* or *Dasya* or *Sakhya* or *Vatsalya* or *Madhura*. By Sadhanas like these you could hope to attain purity of mind."

Thirdly, the householder should give up the fruit of all work and do it in the spirit of Vairagya (non-attachment). This, it will be seen, is also a repetition of the precept contained in the Gita. The purpose underlying this injunction is this: The householder has, of course, many duties to discharge—his duties to his family, his duties to society at large. When these duties are performed with the feeling, 'I do this, I do that,' the feeling of Ahankara (egoism) or pride tends to get intensified, which is bondage. And this pride assumes a worse form when the doer performs what are known as philanthropic deeds "I do good to society, I help the world, I am responsible for the uplift of my fallen countrymen," says he to himself. Sri Ramakrishna has absolutely no patience with people who brag like this. To talk of doing good to the world is all moonshine. As the Swami Vivekananda has said, this world of ours is like a person suffering from rheumatism. You try to rid the man of the disease but only succeed in driving it from one part of his body to another. Even so, if by doing what you consider good you remove an evil, you find that that good also gives rise to some new form of evil not in existence before. The fact is, this world of ours is, and will for ever continue to be, a mixture of good and evil, and one can never succeed in rooting out the evil. But is not the individual to do good? Yes, he should do it, not with the proud thought that he is bettering the world, but with the humble and devout feeling that by doing good he will gain Chitta-Suddhi (purity of mind) which will enable him to become pure and perfect. "We help ourselves, not the world," should be the motive behind every act of good. This will bring on the necessary humility which is an essential pre-requisite of God's grace.

Fourthly, the Master set his face resolutely against all forms of pseudo-renunciation. He knew that the path of Sannyasa, the path of utter renunciation is only for a few select and chosen souls, while to ordinary mortals the only chance of salvation lies in being Grihasthas (householders) and doing the duties that pertain to their Ashrama. In some cases, the Master saw, the desire to renounce was but the prompting of idleness and a disinclination to

shoulder the responsibilities that the householder's life entailed and he mercilessly exposed these. As the Gita puts it, he who inhibits the actions of the senses but lets his mind dwell on the objects of the senses is a fool and should be called a hypocrite. The only condition when renunciation will be justified is, "when a man becomes mad with God-love." "Then" says the Master, "who is father, who is mother, and who is wife? He has no duty, he is absolved from all debts. When a man reaches that state, he forgets the whole world, he becomes unconscious even of his body which he loves dearly. In such a state of divine intoxication his duties fall off by themselves and renunciation comes to him." Not until a householder reaches such a state, will he be considered fit for Sannyasa.

Fifthly, the Master would have every person cherish the idea that he is free. "If a man constantly says, 'I am free, I am free,' he is sure to be free. On the other hand, he who always thinks he is in bondage brings bondage on himself in the end." This idea the Swami Vivekananda has developed in the following: "Even in the midst of misery and degradation, let the soul say to itself 'I am It, I am It.' Whoever thinks I am little makes a mistake, for the self is all that exists. Happiness and misery, good and evil may envelop me for a moment, veiling the self, but I am still there. They pass away, because they are changeable. I shine, because I am unchangeable. If misery comes, I know it is finite, therefore it must die. If evil comes, I know it is finite, it must go. I alone am infinite, and untouched by anything. For, I am the Infinite, the Eternal, Changeless Self . . . When the hands work, the mind should repeat, 'I am It, I am It.' Think of it, dream of it until it becomes bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh, until all the hideous dreams of littleness, of weakness, of misery and of evil have entirely vanished, and no more then can the Truth be hidden from you even for a moment." Verily, as you think so you become.

These are some of the lessons which the Great Paramahansa taught and it is up to us who worship him as a seer to ponder over them, assimilate them and follow them in our daily lives.

May He protect us, may He support us! May we apply our strength! May our reading be illustrious! May there be no hatred among us! Peace, peace, peace!

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## THE APOCALYPSE UNVEILED.\*

*By Swami Prabhavananda.*

In order to approach the study of any scripture, three main points have to be considered. First : The subject matter—the particular Ideal it represents and the means of realizing that Ideal. Second : The utility of such a study or realization. And Third : The relation which such study or realization bears to life.

Before we focus our attention particularly on the subject matter of the Apocalypse, let us briefly consider the Bible as a whole. What do the Bibles of the world teach? The answer to this question will remove many difficulties and the Apocalypse also will stand more clearly revealed to us.

The followers of different religions universally believe that the Scriptures are Divine Revelations. But, due to ignorance and sectarianism, they lay singular claim of revelation to their own particular Scriptures. We, however, who believe in the truths of all religions, believe that all the Bibles are Divine Revelations.

What is meant by Divine Revelation? Experience. This experience is not of the senses, neither is it an intellectual cognition or perception of the imaginative faculty. It is direct recognition, direct apperception of the Spirit by the Spirit in what the Hindus call *Samadhi* or superconscious vision.

In the Vedas it is said: "A knower of Brahman becomes Brahman." Brahman (the Absolute Spirit of God) is unknown and unknowable. No man has seen God with the physical eye. Yet the proof of God lies in the fact that He *can* be perceived. We become God by *going to Him*. As man, we become a playground of His Almighty Will. The Scriptures are but the experiences of this truth about God, recorded by those who have realized Him. If, with this higher understanding, we study the Christian Bible, a new and deeper interpretation will reveal itself.

Because of the fact that undue emphasis has been laid on the fables which are purely allegorical or mythical—interpreting them in many instances, as history—the true meaning of the Christian Bible is not found therein by its scholars and students. The Bible

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\*At the earnest request of some students' of the Vedanta Society of Portland Oregon, U. S. A., to explain the Christian Bible, the Swami has taken up 'The Revelation of St. John the Divine—the last and the most misunderstood book of the New Testament—for his Thursday meditation class. His interpretation of the "Revelation," the Greek word for which is Apocalypse, has created a keen interest among the students, and will, we hope, be of interest to our readers.—Ed. V. K.

is neither history nor prophecy. Its entire purpose is to take us to the Eternal Presence. It must teach us to go beyond this transitory life to the Ever-present Reality.

Orthodox Christian students of the Apocalypse interpret the book as either history or prophecy. It is neither the one nor the other, but a Divine Revelation of the Eternal Truths of God. The physical happenings spoken of therein are allegory, pure and simple. Otherwise they would have no meaning.

The word "Apocalypse," means literally "disrobing" or "unveiling," but the truths contained in the book bearing the name of "Apocalypse" are so heavily veiled that none but the Initiate can disrobe them. The book is purposely written in allegorical language to keep the truths secret (sacred).

But the thought naturally arises, since the real purpose of the study of the Scriptures is to know the Truth—to know and feel God—why has the writer kept the meaning hidden? In almost every religion there are higher truths kept secret from the person of only average development. These are known as the esoteric or inner teaching.

You may ask: "Cannot Truth stand the light of day, that she must be veiled and hidden in this way?" Yes, surely she can and does. Truth stands before all but only those whose eyes are open can see her. Even though the highest truths be explained in the simplest words few there are who will understand; but to those who are sincerely seeking Truth, she will reveal herself.

One very important reason for keeping the highest truths secret, is that until and unless you grow in character and renunciation, these truths arouse certain psychic powers which are temptations in the psychic world, and used with out true wisdom, will bring moral and physical ruin.

Originally the Christian Church had its Gnosis or secret Science, which was jealously guarded, being imparted only to the comparatively few who were deemed worthy of initiation; but that part of the teaching is almost lost to the Christian world—because of the fact that fundamentally Christianity at the present day, is based upon dogma and faith and not upon realization.

Speaking briefly, the Apocalypse contains the esoteric teachings of Christ. It tells what "Jesus the Christ" really is. It gives the key to that Divine Gnosis, which is the same in all ages and in all religions. It is a secret science only because it is hidden and locked in the inner nature of every man, however ignorant and humble, and none but he himself can turn the key.

Thus we arrive at the definition of our first point—the subject matter of the book. It is self-conquest; the giving birth to oneself as a spiritual being; the birth from above; evolving the divinity and perfection which lie hidden, though potential in every being.

Now for the second point—the utility of religious study and of the realization of God. To understand this we must ascertain the highest standard of utility. If you ask, "Can Religion give us food and shelter?" we have to reply in the negative. The object of religion is to give us eternal life. It helps us to attain the Eternal amongst the non-eternals of life; to realize the Everlasting Bliss amongst the ephemeral pleasures of life.

This idea has been beautifully expressed in the fourth gospel of the Bible, while Christ was talking to the woman of Samaria: "Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

We find this same idea in the Scriptures of the Hindus. In one of the Upanishads we find the great sage, Yagnavalkya on the eve of his departure from the world for a contemplative life, offering his good wife, Maitreyi, his worldly belongings. But Maitreyi, desiring only the Eternal, asked: "What would be the use of these things? Would they give me immortality?" "No", replied Yagnavalkya, "but these will make you rich in this world." But Maitreyi's only answer was: "What is the use?" And this must be the standard of utility for a religious life.

From that standpoint—the utility of study with its resultant realization is according to Christian belief, Salvation or Eternal heaven, or what the Hindus call Moksha or Freedom—(Freedom from ignorance and from all bondage of life and death).

Through religion, then, is the highest purpose of life realized. There is attained, as the Hindu philosophers say "complete cessation of miseries."

In this connection it would be well to explain the allegory of the fall of Adam. Adam is the perfect man—made "in the image of God." Satan intervenes; Maya (or ignorance) influences Eve (or Buddhi)—the intellect. When our intellect gets clogged up, we lose paradise—we forget our real nature, the kingdom of God within. Only with the help of Christ or the power of Spirit can we regain that lost paradise.

Christ's life is not to be viewed as we would the life history of a Lincoln or a Washington. Nation after nation may be born on this earth and wiped off from its face with all its leaders and their deeds. New races will arise, new civilisations will spring up. The old history may be forgotten. The memory of even a Lincoln or a Washington fade away— but the Christ or the Krishna abides for ever. Their lives are the play of the Divine and therefore the Eternal play. The sages and devotees witness this Eternal Divine play of a Christ or a Krishna within their hearts.

This idea may sound strange to you—but its strangeness will vanish if you consider the experiences of these great ones. Read the lives of St. Francis or Sri Chaitanya and a host of other great saints—how they witnessed the play of Christ, Krishna and of the Sons of God.

From the standpoint of religious experience the life histories of the Sons of God are not history in the sense of being chronicles of passing events. They are records of the Eternal Divine play. Christ on the cross, Krishna playing His flute, Ramakrishna with His Divine smile are still seen, and for all eternity they will play on the hearts of their devotees.

Thus the Bible which records the so-called history of the life of Christ—records not the passing events, but the Eternal play—which was, which is and which is to come. Bibles or the Vedas are not histories but Divine revelations—the revelations of the Eternal Truth. Not that which *was*, neither which *will be*—but which *is*— the Eternal present.

Scriptures record the Eternal Truth. It is written: "Ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free," but the fact must not be lost sight of that the mere study of the Scriptures, cannot give us this knowledge of the Truth.

We read of distant countries; we enjoy hearing of them, but until and unless we see them for ourselves, can we say that we know them? Study is one thing. Experience is quite another and very different thing. The real purpose of every religion is to help us to *experience* the Truth for ourselves.

In the Vedas—the Scripture of the Hindus—there is a beautiful passage which says: "I have known this Truth which is beyond all darkness and have attained Immortality. You also, having known this, realize *your* Immortality."



We have to realize the Truth—the Eternal Truth as it is revealed in these Scriptures—for ourselves. And there is a way to every knowledge. How did the great seers attain to the knowledge that is recorded in the scriptures?

We shall presently discuss the epistemology or process of this Divine knowledge. To understand this, I think Plato's analysis of the sources of knowledge will be of great help to us.

According to Plato, there are four faculties of the soul, with their four corresponding degrees of knowledge.

First, the world can be divided into two groups—one, the visible, the sensuous world; the other, the intelligible or the supersensuous world. The knowledge of the visible world is said to be illusory knowledge; that of the other is true knowledge or wisdom.

We know the world in two ways: First, by the perception of images and second, by faith. The knowledge of the supersensuous world is divided also in two ways—by philosophic reason and by direct perception. Within the first two groups falls all our knowledge of the physical world, the laws of nature and that knowledge pertaining to physical science. This knowledge is illusory—for the visible world is not real but an illusion. This is also the view held by the monistic school of Vedanta—that the world is a *Maya*, not an absolute reality.

The third degree, the philosophic reason, is attained when our pure reason is directed toward knowing the Absolute Principle. After a while we come to understand that the Highest is not to be attained by either reason or intellect. They are inadequate to reach That.

Next comes direct cognition—the direct apprehension of the Truth by the higher mind or the purified intellect. In another place Plato speaks of the *Mantic State* which is a sort of madness produced "By a Divine release from the ordinary ways of man." You have heard about the "God-intoxicated man." All the great teachers can be said to be "God-intoxicated."

Let us compare this with the different states of consciousness as related in Vedanta.

Experience is said to be the source of knowledge, but this experience is again varied in the different states of consciousness.

We say this *Turiya* or superconscious vision, where we have the direct cognition of the truth, is the highest because this experience is not contradicted by any other experience, as the dream is contradicted by our waking, or our waking, by the *Turiya* state. Further, this consciousness persists even in what is known as death—for once this consciousness is attained, there is no fear of death—Immortality is attained.

This Transcendental Consciousness is the *Atman* (Spirit God). And there is alone this one consciousness for all time and for all eternity. This appears limited in other states of experience only because *It* is shining through limited instruments—which are the ego, the intellect, the mind, the senses, etc. The light in a lantern appears distorted and coloured according to the glass through which it shines.

This Transcendental Consciousness again is known as Revelation and what is recorded in the Bible or the Vedas of the world is the experience, the direct cognition of this Transcendental Consciousness.

## THE HEART OF HINDUISM.

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B. A., B. L.

It is an undeniable fact that India is the heart of Asia and that even to-day China and Japan and Burma and other countries feel that India is the true source of their spiritual life. Even more wonderful than the extensive life of Indian culture is its intensive life. Despite variations of language and caste and creed, India poured her atmosphere of unifying life about the variations till these became inter-related aspects of a central unity. Mr. Vincent Smith says in his *Oxford History of India*: "India beyond all doubt possesses a deep underlying fundamental unity, far more profound than that produced either by geographical isolation or by political superiority. That unity transcends the innumerable diversities of blood, colour language, dress, manners and sect."

In India, religion is the whole attitude of the soul towards the whole. Intuitive realisation is of the essence of the Indian conception of religion. A deep insight and experience form the warp and the woof of the Soul's attitude to the universe and God.

Religion is self-certitude, self-illumination, self-realisation. To use the words of the Gita it is *Antahsukha*, *Antararama*, *Antarojyotih*. *Sraddha*, *Karma*, *Yoga*, *Bhakti* and *Jnana* are the steps leading up to the temple of self illumination.

The large inclusiveness of Hinduisim has prevented its allying with religious intolerance and persecution. The fires of the inquisition had no counter part in India, though sectarian fanaticism was not unknown here. The Hindu faith never consigns non-Hindus to hell-fire. It does not seek to proselytise. It has no megalomania at all. Its aim is rather to induce every man to practise his inherited spiritual discipline while adding that transforming touch by which the discipline grows into something richer and finer than itself. It fulfils and never destroys.

Thus the Hindu faith is not a mere philosophy or a mere creed or a mere code of morals. It is an experience, a vision, a realisation. The various paths of Karma, Bhakti and Yoga are not different and inconsistent paths but, bye-paths leading towards the supreme path of *Jnana*, leading to *Avagati* or *Anubhava* (spiritual realisation). It has been well said: "To escape by the ecstasy of inward vision from the whirlwind of time, to see oneself *sub species aeternae* is the word of command of all great religions of the higher races: and this psychological possibility is the foundation of all great hopes." Such ecstasy of vision makes the body and the mind full of power and fit for deeper and longer and sweeter and more sustained vision. Saint Teresa says well: "Though the body is often infirm and full of suffering before ecstasy, it comes out of ecstasy full of health and admirably prepared for action." While every religion proclaims these truths, the distinction of Hinduism lies in its wonderful and various store of *sadhanas*, in its preservation of the practical methods of at-one-ment with God, its large inclusiveness and toleration, and its rare combination of discipline, duty and devotion. Every man must, while he is in the plane of relativity, do his duty. While he has not realised the unity of Bliss, he must commune often with God and pray for holiness, freedom and love. Only through discipline, duty and devotion can he move upwards to the highest goal through this world of baits and battles and pain and pleasure, and attain the endless and Eternal Bliss of *Sachchidananda*.

## CASTE, KARMA AND YOGA.\*

*By Jane Alden.*

"What about caste" I asked one day. My Swami replied that as they were originally constituted before the abuses and rigidities of the present system crept in—the four castes of Hindu Society were intended simply to outline the four great basic divisions of mankind and the duties naturally incumbent upon them. The dharma or duty of the Brahmins, the sages and priests was to lead a life of simplicity and constant God-Consciousness and to teach what they themselves had realised through their unswerving pursuit of truth. The duty of the Kshatriyas, the rulers and warriors was to protect and govern; to administer the people's affairs wisely and generously and—let the politicians of today's ruling class take notice!—with no thought for themselves or their personal interests. The duty of the Vaisyas, artisans and men of commerce, was to produce wealth, goods, everything that society needs; but again, to produce not for their own selfish gain but in order to redistribute their wealth where it was needed; to support the scholars, care for the poor and infirm, pay the soldiers to fight for them. The duty of the Sudras or laborers was to serve and also to learn and grow through observing the other castes.

"Well, there are these four general types of men in every country and every civilisation," explained the Swami. "And a happy healthy society exists where each man is doing the work each is fitted for and where all four are equally respected. Our Hindu Society degenerated when the Brahman or priest caste usurped more than its share of importance; and your American Society, if you will allow me to say so, is equally in danger through your over-emphasis of the commercial man's prestige. Not till you encourage the development of some scholars and sages to lead you, to give breadth and loftiness and clear ideals to your national life, not till we encourage and educate our ignorant laboring classes, will either of our societies possess its rightful vigor."

"But," he went on after a pause, "we believe that the individual soul comes to take its birth in material conditions that exactly fit the spiritual state to which it has attained. And that state is determined by the nature of its karma, all its own acts, in

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\* From "With my begging Bowl in India" published in *Asa*, February 1927.

previous lives. Karma, however, instead of implying blind bondage, is in reality the most encouraging of laws; for it asserts that man is absolute master of his destiny. If the present form of existence is of his own making, he can undo it and better it as well. Each life and each position be it that of king or scavenger is regarded as a sacred opportunity."

To me such a conception of the universe supplies many deficiencies in our western outlook on life. The theory of the individual's advancing gradually from the lower and cruder forms of life, through various sets of experiences that are constantly widening his field of comprehension until at last he actually comprehends *all*—that is, becomes one with the Infinite—appeals to both heart and intellect. The re-incarnation and karma theories furnish the best explanation of many apparent injustices and discrepancies; the trouble-some problem of evil in connection with an All-Merciful and Loving Father; the cruel inequalities between man and man in physical, intellectual and spiritual condition. Granted that re-incarnation is a hypothesis only, and cannot be proved, it seems to me a more reasonable hypothesis than either the Cellular transmission of the materialist or the illogical out-of-nothing but into immortality hypotheses of other religions.

And certainly, for me at least, it gives a much higher significance to the individual and a much finer incentive to his life and work. No longer am I simply an individual, harassed and sorely worried husband and father. I am a pilgrim on a long, long road. I have arrived at this situation for the same reason that in the past I have been in many other roles: to gain knowledge, experience, expansion. This belief at once puts all our relations with one another on a different basis—lifts them above the sordid "what-do-I-get-out-of it" resentfulness that underlies our modern association and into the inspiring unity of a common struggle out of a common ignorance toward an ultimate freedom and enlightenment.

There is no excuse in Hindu philosophy for the man who does not strive with might and main to succeed in his enterprises. This is no easiest way for shilly-shalliers or inert weaklings. On the contrary, the whole teaching of the Gita, the great Hindu Scripture is, *manliness*, fulfilling one's duty to the last iota, even if doing so means death. It is not that I am released from responsibilities but that I get a new perspective on my responsibilities. Instead of the one-life, one-opportunity sense of feverish rush and necessity

for instant accomplishment, there is mental quiet—and therefore greater efficiency—in the consciousness that I have all eternity to accomplish.

In such a universe, there is no lost soul, no eternal condemnation, no condemnation even now. Just the orderly law—sow and reap, take what you want and pay for it. And as soon as the time comes when you know better than to want it, then take the next thing—learn from that. And when you want nothing more but God—then too you may hope and finally attain.

For eventually the day arrives for every soul in this universe after a longer or shorter number of lives, when that soul has had enough of disappointing struggles and wakes to utter disillusion with the world and all its false lures. Then begins the "return journey." The man has learned that the happiness he is seeking is not to be found in this outside world. Can it be found anywhere? Yes, has said every spiritual teacher since the beginning of time : go inside. But a man has really to have finished with the futile chase of personal pleasures before he will want to lose himself or to know God. Then, and then only, will he be ready for the "inward path" of the spiritually aspiring. Then he will be ready for Yoga.

Most Westerners think of Yoga as breathing exercises and "concentrating" on the tip of the nose ! Yoga is, however, essentially the purification of the mind from egoism, so that one may enter into union with the Supreme. . . . In this Yoga no forced renunciation or laboured 'concentration' is required. The man stays exactly where he is, performs all his usual tasks, but does so without the thought of profiting selfishly. Money has to be earned; the rent has to be paid; but the principal incentive will not be money. The work will be done as his Dharma—the sacred duty assigned to his special place;—and every one of our vocations—medicine, law, architecture, business,—has its own definite ideal laid down for it, just as the Hindu castes have theirs. Seeing the printer, dictating the letter, interviewing the salesman, taking the man from out of town to luncheon—there is no act of the business day that may not be done as 'a holy act' or sacrifice to the God one is trying to attain.

The Christian would say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these;" the Hindu would see in the printer, the stenographer, the salesman, Narayan—God Himself. In the Indian mutiny, so it is reported a Hindu stabbed by a Muhammadan

smiled upon his assassin and with last breath declared "Thou also art He." A life lived in such an atmosphere—of beholding and serving the One Infinite Being in all beings—must inevitably "Starve out" the ego and come into the larger consciousness that the individual is seeking. Flashes of the Truth will break in on him; he will have moments of revelation so convincing that, even though they are only moments and he has to go back to the daily grind again, he goes back not the same. Sometimes in the midst of the worst worry and confusion—illness at home, a panic down town, an unusually bad 'jam' at the office—just when things seem hopelessly involved and beyond rescue, the extraordinary experience happens. With the most terrific noise all round him, he finds everything suddenly very still and miraculously clear. He seems to be standing outside himself, seeing himself and the whole office—and beyond that the whole universe—not piece-meal and disconnected as usual but adjusted, shining and complete, each part exactly as it should be. He not only understands what to do about his immediate problem; he seems to understand everything. "This is Truth" he says and peace comes upon him. Ananda! At last he is satisfied. For that breathless moment, he has known perfect life, perfect knowledge, perfect happiness, so according to the Hindus, he has known God.

But how may these rare moments of revelation be prolonged into a more enduring consciousness? By perseverance and practice, says the Hindu. The secret of attainment in religion is the same as in any other field: giving the entire attention. With the man who has awakened and is trying to advance 'on the path' not only work but friends, amusements, recreations all will have an upward and expansive tendency. The whole life will move Godward.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### THE "EVOLUTION" THEORY AND AMERICA

More than a year and a half ago the trial of a science teacher in the American state of Tennessee on a charge of teaching "evolution" created quite a sensation throughout the civilised world. Many in India were surprised to find that such a thing was possible in the twentieth century and that in such an advanced land as "scientific" America. However, the unexpected came to pass. The teacher of "heresy" was found guilty and fined \$. 100 for violating the state legislations against the theory of evolution, enacted by the fundamentalists who insist on pure Bible study in schools.

An appeal was made against the conviction. According to the *New York Times* the Supreme Court of Tennessee passed its judgment on the 15th January last. It upheld the Evolution statute but at the same time reversed the conviction on technical grounds. In the ordinary course the case ought to have been retried. But all the judges agreed that nothing would be gained by prolonging the life of a "bizarre case" and that "the peace and dignity of the State...will be subserved by the entry of a nolle prosequi herein."

There was some difference amongst the judges as to the intent of the law. The majority decision held that the legislature only intended "to forbid teaching that man descended from a lower order of animals." One of the judges observed in his separate opinion that the act only prohibited the teaching of the materialistic theory of evolution, which denied the hand of God in creation. According to him the Biblical theory of creation need not necessarily mean instantaneous creation. "One is not prohibited," he observed, "from teaching, either 'days' as used in the book of Genesis, means days of twenty-four hours, the literalist view, or days of 'a thousand years', as held by liberalists, so long as the teaching does not exclude God as the author of human life."

Darwin—the father of Evolution—clearly spoke of "laws impressed on matter by God" and believed in the probable descent of all organic beings "from one primordial form in which life was first breathed by the Creator. But still the Christian Church has been deadly antagonistic to the theory of evolution, because the latter threatened to strike at the very roots of the Biblical story of creation supposed to have come out of nothing, some six thousand years ago. The theory was also revolting to the theologians because they feared that they would have to look up for their ancestors not in the garden of Eden but in the zoological gardens, and so amongst beings that were and still are believed by the orthodox Christians as not possessing a soul.

The Christian Church tried its best but in vain to suppress the theory of evolution as it did in the case of many other great achievements of science. The Vatican Council passed—"If any one confesses not that the world and all things which are contained in it, both spiritual and mental, have been in their whole substance produced by God out of nothing...let him be anathema." But all these attempts were not quite successful. The theory of evolution counts to-day as its votaries millions of people in the so-called Christian lands. It has no doubt taken a decidedly materialistic



turn and is influencing many accordingly. But at the same time the evolutionary philosophy is helping many thoughtful men and women to outgrow the crude notions of creation out of nothing through the fiat of an "absentee" God dwelling in a far-off heaven. It is further enabling them to grasp instead the more scientific and philosophical conception of evolution of soul and nature out of the Great Immanent Being who, as the Vedanta declares, is the Eternal Power that impels all things,—is the all prevading principle that in its highest nature is Life, Intelligence and Love Absolute.

But still there are millions in America, as in all other countries, who revel in the crudest religious thoughts. Christian missionaries from the West who came to India to save the soul of the poor heathen take special delight in speaking of the superstitions of the coloured people. But they are deliberately silent about the intolerance and bigotry that dominate the hearts of a vast section of their own people. No wonder that Ingersoll—the great agnostic orator of America—cautioned Swami Vivekananda not to be so bold and outspoken as he was but to be careful about his preachings of "new doctrines." He said—"Forty years ago you would have been hanged if you had come to preach in this country. You would have been burned alive, or you would have been stoned out of the villages, if you had come even much later." There is no doubt that even the agnostics and atheists prepared the way for the reception of the Swami's universal ideals by breaking down some of the encrustations of superstitions associated with the Christian Church in America.

Things have improved considerably in recent years inspite of the occasional recrudescence of the old narrowness and bigotry. And as a result of the influx of Vedantic ideas, a great transformation is taking place in the religious thought of America. An ever-increasing number of seekers after Truth are coming to believe in the Hindu views of evolution, which by its grand conceptions of God, soul, laws of karma and re-incarnation, fulfils the theory of evolution presented by the scientists and thinkers of the West.

#### UNIVERSITY IDEAL

During the last ten or fifteen years a number of universities have been formed in different parts of India. It is rather too early to say whether the multiplication of universities has been productive of any very definite results. According to some critics these new universities have not been able to achieve anything beyond relieving the congestion of the older and bigger universities and

producing some more B.A. s and M.A. s. It cannot be denied that emphasis is now being laid more and more upon the teaching and research aspect of the universities as opposed to its merely examining function. Yet it is difficult to acknowledge that the latest models have succeeded to any satisfactory extent in formulating definitely the educational needs of our country and suggesting suitable ways and means for their realisation.

At the recent convocation of the Delhi University, His Excellency the Viceroy made some interesting observations about the functions of universities and the value of university training. Referring to the expectations which ordinary people entertain he observed—"I think that a good many people to-day are inclined to judge a university training by its commercial value to its graduates. They try to make upon a nicely audited balance sheet expressing culture and learning as an asset to be valued in pounds, shillings and pence and treating knowledge that has no market value as a bad debt. Such people have, I think, fallen into that fallacious reasoning which, as Hazlitt once said, confuses the knowledge of useful things with useful knowledge. Here in India many look on a university as little more than a turnstile leading into the arena of Government service, and if they find no service open to them are apt to feel that they have been cheated as if they had paid for admission to a place of entertainment and then found there was no room for them." Such a charge cannot be lightly treated; for, it is not so much the people as the Government and its educational policy that are responsible for this state of things.

Another noteworthy observation of His Excellency was that "Indian universities lack something of the individuality that is enjoyed by universities elsewhere, in England and Scotland." He urges that like the English and Scotch universities, universities in this country also should specialise in particular departments of study and research. "I see no reason," he observed, "why Bombay should not be a great centre of textile research both as regards fabric and machinery for the whole East. Similarly Patna University need not be deterred by the institution of the new School of Mining at Dhanbad from developing a strong school of mining, engineering and geology. Calcutta, the headquarters of the Bengali people with their ancient culture, might win place and renown as a centre for the study of the humanities." On principle such a division of labour would no doubt conduce to efficiency of a sort, but it is doubtful whether in a vast country like India such a specialisation

would be at all practicable. But within the same province different universities may promote research in different branches of learning.

Whatever the particular line of work chosen, it might be safely asserted that so long as a university is held in leading strings by men who play the educationist without caring to get into close touch with the people, it can never succeed in fulfilling its primary objects in the least. In a general way it may be said that the greatest service that a university can do to its alumni is not to make them, as it often happens, strangers among their own countrymen, but to help them to imbibe the best of the traditions and culture of the race, and above all to make them fit instruments for the betterment of the moral and social well-being of the entire people.

#### HAS CHRISTIANITY A FUTURE

In the January number of the *Open Court* Mr. Charles Clark contributes a very interesting article on Has Christianity a future? Several reasons are adduced by this writer, for thinking that Christianity may not be the religion of the future. The first is that "there are still too many divisions, too many Christian sects, too many that are needless, useless, a mere expression of folly, waste and senseless rivalry." The second reason is "its numerical disparity." According to the writer, "in respect to Christianity the latest statistics show clearly that it is almost hopelessly inferior in numbers as compared with the other religious forces of the world." The third reason is given to be "the unreliability of its historical and literary foundation." Regarding the origin, validity, purpose and content of the Christian scriptures, there has been incessant criticism during the last century and the results are not very favourable. The fourth reason is "its almost universal and persistent antagonism of knowledge." The writer further adds :—"This is the darkest page in the history of Christianity. What good it has done is seriously affected by this unfortunate and unreasonable attitude toward knowledge, this perpetual and insistent protest against the natural use of normal faculties. Almost every where, and at all, or almost all times, reason has been decried and faith exalted. It is almost unbelievable to what extent Christianity, through its organised institutions has gone to retard advancing knowledge. Especially is this true in the sphere of natural sciences."

Among the weakening influences we must take account, says the writer, of its clinging to super-natural and discarded doctrines. "To affirm and insist that religion to be valid must necessarily be associated with such beliefs as miraculous intervention, vicarious atonement, Biblical infallibility, physical resurrection, an eternity of misery or of bliss is to demand more than many are willing to grant."

The writer holds that Christianity has failed in bringing about a general social betterment; and according to him "the real difficulty has been, and is, that the Christians themselves are without conviction as to the validity and worth of their own cult." Another heavy item of indictment is its distinctly sectarian character. By way of proof for this charge the writer asserts that "they are to be found in the exacting and dogmatic demands of Christianity that require belief in the supernatural and miraculous, or the rejection of all those who do not comply with these demands. There is not and never has been, the slightest note of the universal or of real tolerance in Christianity." "Does not Christianity teach the fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man, and is not this universalism?"—will be the nature of the defence that will readily occur to the devout Christian. In the opinion of the writer the distinctive feature of Christianity is the dogmatic element consisting of the supernatural and miraculous, rather than the ethical content. And if the dogmatic elements are discarded there is nothing left to justify the name Christian. The writer concludes:—"Divine Fatherhood and human brotherhood, devotion and social equity do represent the universal. They are not sectarian, nor original with Christianity, but have been in the world to some extent, and in some measure, ever since religion has passed the stage of fetichism."

It is usual with the adherents of every creedal religion to boast that their faith alone is the most universal, and as such it alone can be the religion of the future. There is obviously no harm in such a belief; nay, faith of an unshakable nature in one's religion is desirable and praise-worthy. But there is one collateral consequence of such a frame of mind which produces more evil than good and it is this. Most often, those who would wish to make their religion, the religion of the future, expect this happy consummation to be brought about by the destruction of all other faiths except their own. Whether such a course of events is ever likely to result, we need not pause to speculate, but this much is beyond all dispute that a "universality" which is secured by the destruction of all rivals could scarcely be of any worth to the future of mankind.

As the modern apostle of Hinduism, Swami Vivekananda always claimed that the Vedanta alone is fit to be the Universal Religion. This claim is singularly free from the defect common to all other similar claims, i. e. the destruction of other faiths. The Vedanta believes that all religions are true so far as they go; all progress is only closer and closer approximation to the Truth; or rather they are but different photographs of the same Truth from different positions. If any religion can possibly become universal in the future it must whole-heartedly accept the great discovery of the Vedic seers "*Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti*" (Truth is one, sages call it by various names).

## IN MEMORY OF SWAMI PRAKASHANANDA

Swami Prakashananda had been growing frailer during the last one year although he seemed to be in very good health. He was always cheerful and smiling, and so it came as a shock to everybody when he took to his bed about ten days before his passing away. Dr. Herman Kronenberg, President of the Vedanta Society, was called and was in almost constant attendance during his last illness. Even on the morning of Sunday—his last day on earth—the Swami sang a song and remarked about the gloomy weather. Ten minutes before the end he was speaking to Swami Dayananda.

Swami Prakashananda seemed not to suffer at all although he was very weak. He passed away at about 5-30 p.m. on February, 13th, 1927. It was like a deep meditation from which the beautiful Soul wished not to return—Divine Mother having said: "Well done my good and faithful servant, enter thou into My Kingdom."

Since that evening the rain and wind did not cease until Wednesday, February 16th, date fixed for our beloved Swami's funeral. On this day Nature drew her wet gray curtain aside. The beautiful sun shone forth in a sky of azure blue, a fitting symbol of the glorious light shed on all by the life that had just closed its earthly chapter.

Ribbons of golden light streamed through the southern windows of the Temple as, one by one, hundreds of students and friends of the Swami came to bring their floral offering and pay the last sad tribute of gratitude to the Swami's memory. Every nook and corner of the Altar was banked high with flowers, each an expression of love and affection for the beloved departed. The casket was draped in a lacy pall of maiden-hair and carnations, the gift of Joya, one of the Swami's much-loved students. One of the most beautiful offerings from the Society was a floral chair made of jonquils, lillies of the valley, freesias, and violets. It was a full sized chair and occupied the place on the platform where the Swami was wont to sit in meditation. It held a framed picture of Swami Prakashananda. As one gazed at this beautiful chair one could almost feel that the Swami was indeed there occupying it. From far and wide came these floral tributes. One exquisite large wreath of tulips, red leaves and pussy willow, came with words of love and gratitude from the Portland Vedanta Centre where Swami Prabhavananda presides. Swami Paramananda also sent from the Ananda Ashrama a pleasing expression of his regard for his brother Swami. Another came from the far off State of Washington, expressing the love and devotion of Mrs. Nine McDonald, a student of Tacoma. Also from the sunny southland came students and messages of love. All the floral beauty that love could bring was massed about the bier of our beloved Swami Prakashananda. Swami Bodhananda came all the way from Riverside to be present in person. Just on the stroke of eleven

soft strains from the organ played by Tejas, swelled forth through the hushed silence of the Temple. Then it was an inspiring Presence that lifted all thoughts to Divine Mother, who out of Her bounty, gives all that man ever can have and calls back to Her heart the child whose work has been well done. For ten minutes a soft melody filled the Temple, until one could almost feel the caress of angel's wings as the last lingering note died softly away. Just at this holy moment Swamis Bodhananda, Prabhavananda and Dayananda entered and took their seats upon the platform. Swami Bodhananda then chanted a prayer to which every heart throbbed its amen.

Mrs. Sigrid Millhauser sang in her inimitable manner, with deep pathos and devotion, a song of her own composition breathing our warm appreciation and love for Swami Prakashananda to whom Divine Mother had just beckoned. Next Viraja chanted in Sanskrit several passages we had heard so often from the lips of our beloved Swami. He had taught Viraja these chants and many times we had heard them chanting together these favourites of his. Now as we listened memory supplied the missing voice and he seemed to be standing beside her, filling our hearts with melody and Divine praise.

Swami Bodhananda then spoke a tribute of praise and reminiscence. He said that Swami Prakashananda and he had been friends for thirty-seven years, even from boyhood. In all these years never had he heard a harsh word or known of an unkind act of Swami Prakashananda. They had been disciples of the same spiritual teachers. Their first spiritual instruction was from the Holy Mother. Later they received their Sannyasa initiation from the illustrious Swami Vivekananda. Swami Bodhananda spoke at length of the faith and devotion we should all try to emulate. "Life," said he, "is not just a few years of terrestrial existence limited by birth and death but it is an immortal existence. Birth and death are but incidents in this greater life." He likened the terrestrial life to a small dark room from which we pass through the door of death into another immeasurably larger room where the soul enjoys greater freedom and light.

After these touching words from Swami Bodhananda, Swami Prabhavananda told us how much nearer was our dear Swami Prakashananda to us all than when he was confined to a physical form. Now he was indeed free and within the hearts of all those who loved and trusted him. Two beautiful characteristics of Swami Prakashananda's life he held before our eyes as dominant and worthy of emulation by all his students. One was equanimity, poise even in the midst of the pairs of opposites. This the Swami taught us by living example so that we too might grow in Divine virtue. The second was selfless love for all. It was a marked fact, attested by many students, that when with Swami Prakashananda he seemed to be all yours, you felt it in your heart—so pure and selfless was his love. This same experience came to all.

Swami Prabhavananda recalled to our minds the question Swami Turiyananda once put to Swami Vivekananda in regard to the degree of realization he had reached. Swami Vivekananda re-

plied: "I know not of degrees but know the heart has grown big." The Swami affirmed that this could truly be said of Swami Prakashananda, his heart had grown so big as to enfold all within his selfless love. This he had expressed in word, thought and deed these twenty years that he had labored in the Western world, verily giving his life for us.

Swami Prabhavananda closed his remarks by urging us to emulate the many virtues of Swami Prakashananda and to pray for his blessings. After our two visiting Swamis had spoken so sincerely and feelingly to us, our own dear Swami Dayananda arose to speak. His opening words were like a caress.

"Friends, the sweet silver voice that spoke words of love, hope and strength for twenty years is stilled, taken from us by the cruel hand of Death. And yet such a life has not been lived in vain. Our beloved Swami Prakashananda was the embodiment of love and self sacrifice. He came to perform the mission of his Masters, Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda."

Though our Swami confessed that he knew not what to say, yet his words were truly inspired and will long be treasured in the hearts of the students and friends present. Not a heart failed to throb more truly in the spirit of harmony and loving friendship as he recounted the subtle influence of a perfect life that spread harmony and love by example and precept.

"Death," said Swami Dayananda, "is the only sure thing that comes to all alike but it is a blessed privilege to die such a death as did Swami Prakashananda."

The Swami quoted the old saying: "When you come to the terrestrial sphere by birth as a baby you cry while your relatives rejoice but the beauty lies in living so that at your passing, the world will mourn and you will go smiling. Such was the passing of the Swami Prakashananda."

"Thousands now mourn for him. He was life and light to all. Truly he fulfilled all the duties of life, and Divine Mother has called him home."

Swami Dayananda touched all hearts to the core when he told us of the time Swami Vivekananda put his arms about Swami Prakashananda's neck and told him that he had sacrificed his own life in the West and now he, Swami Prakashananda was to sacrifice his life also, which he did for twenty years, and because of these sacrifices, Great Ones would come out of the West."

"In the life of Swami Prakashananda you found religion personified. He lived and radiated true religion every day under every circumstance. His had a love that embraced all the world and you knew and felt it. His motto was: 'Give all you have and expect no return' and he truly fulfilled it."

Every heart throbbed with love and hope as Swami Dayananda, sensing our keen loss continued: "He has not forgotten or forsaken us. He still blesses from the other side those who cherish and love him in their hearts." He recalled to our remembrance what we had often heard Swami Prakashananda himself say, that every one was welcome to Divine Mother's Temple—there was a welcome for all alike.

Following these three inspiring talks Viraja sang "Close to Thee". Again memory supplied a loved voice and it seemed to those who listened to be a duet. This was followed by a prayer by Swami Bodhananda in which he asked that we might be led from the unreal to the real, from darkness to light, from death to immortality.

At the close of the prayer all who wished were invited, according to Western custom to march past the bier and take a last look at the temple in which our Swami had dwelt. To the accompaniment of soft music all filed slowly by. Then the pall bearers gently lifted the flower-covered casket and carried it out to the waiting hearse.

From the Temple the cortege drove to the crematory. We entered a pathway strewn with flowers leading to the chapel. Within, Virati played softly as the casket was carried in and placed on a draped stand in the sunlight just beyond the portals.

Swami Bodhananda finished the final chant just as the curtains were drawn before the flower-draped casket, slowly shutting out from our view the bright sunlight. This was indeed the last impressive glimpse for all, and a hushed silence mingled with the sweet fragrance of flowers created an impression that all but broke down the brave resolve of many not to weep.

We each went our several ways filled with love and a fresh determination to live the rest of our lives so as not to be entirely unworthy of our great teacher and friend. Our motto would be to emulate his life as nearly as possible as that the world might know by our living how deep was our love for him.

*Satyavati*

*(Vedanta Society, San Francisco)*

## BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF BHAGAVAN SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

BELUR

The 92nd birthday of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated with great joy and solemnity at Sri Ramakrishna Math, Belur, the Headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission. On Saturday the 5th March, the Tithi was observed with special Puja and Homam. Seven Brahmacharis were initiated on that day into Sannyasa and took the vow of life-long renunciation and service. On Sunday the 13th March, the day of the public celebration, a big portrait of Sri Ramakrishna was tastefully decorated with flowers and evergreens under a specially erected pandal. Nearly a lac of people attended the function, and of them about 17000 people were sumptuously fed. Kirtan and concert parties kept up the spirit of devotion throughout the day. There were also Bhajans and performance of Tarja (native drama). The function came to a close at 10 P.M.



## MADRAS

On the Tithi, special Puja and Homam were performed at the Sri Ramakrishna Math., Mylapore, Madras. On Sunday, the 13th March, the public celebration began with Bhajan in the morning. In the noon nearly 4000 Daridra Narayanas were fed at the Mylapore Market. At 2-30 p.m. there was performance of a Hari-katha Kalkshapam by Brahmasri Sesha Iyengar. In the afternoon lectures on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna were delivered by Mr. K. Vedanta Deshikachariar, Head Master, Ramakrishna Mission Residential High School, and Mr. P. A. Subramania Aiyer, Head Master, Hindu High School, Triplicane in Tamil and English respectively. While thanking the speakers Swami Yatiswarananda spoke a few words suited to the occasion. With the distribution of Prasad to the devotees the function came to a close.

## MYSORE

The celebration at the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mysore was a grand success. On Saturday, the 5th of March, there were Bhajan, Puja, and Harikatha on the Life of Sri Ramakrishna. The following Monday a public meeting was held with Mr. B. M. Sri Kantiah M.A., B.L. Registrar, Mysore University, in the chair. Swami Ghanananda and Mr. A. R. Krishna Sastry M. A. feelingly addressed the audience on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna in English and Kannada respectively. The President spoke highly of the selfless activities of the Ashrama and appealed to the audience to follow in the footsteps of the sages of our Motherland.

## OOTACAMUND

The birthday was observed with great solemnity at the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bishopsdown, Ootacamund. The public celebration which came off on Sunday, the 6th March, began with Bhajan and Music at 2 p.m. Messers. G. Punyakoti Mudaliar and P. Varadachari spoke in Tamil on the life of Sri Ramakrishna. Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam next read an illuminating paper on 'The Ideal Man of the Age.' The day's function came to a close with Aratrikam and distribution of Prasad. On Sunday, the 20th March, nearly 1500 poor people were sumptuously fed and about 100 deserving people were presented with Khaddar cloths.

## NATTAMPALLI

The anniversary was celebrated in a fitting manner at the local Ashrama on Sunday, the 13th March. In the morning a portrait of Sri Ramakrishna was taken in procession with Bhajan parties. Nearly 600 Daridra Narayanas were sumptuously fed. At a meeting held in the afternoon with Mr. Gopalaswami Iyer, Vakil of Tiripattur in the chair, Messers A Ramalinga Pillai, B. Raghavendrachariar, C. R. Krishnaswamy Iyer, B. T. Seshadri achariari, and C. Venkataswami Naidu spoke on the life of Sri Ramakrishna.

## TIRUPUR

The birthday was observed with great devotion at Tirupur. Nearly 700 poor Hindus, and 250 Mussalmans were fed on the morning of the 13th March. In the evening a meeting was held under the presidency of Mr. Anandaji Sett. Messers K. S. Krishnamurti Iyer B.A., L.T. and S. Krishnaswami Iyer B.A., B.L. lectured in Tamil and Mr. M. K. Govindarajalu Chettiar B.A., B.L. in English on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. The president spoke a few words suited to the occasion and distributed to all the boys of the local High School copies of "Words of the Master."

## POONA

Under the auspices of the local Vivekananda society the birthday anniversary was celebrated at Poona on the 13th March. The proceedings began with Bhajan in the morning. Nearly 1500 Daridra Narayanas were fed on the occasion. In the evening Prof. K. H. Kelkar M. A. of the Deccan College delivered a very interesting lecture on "the Life and Message of Sri Ramakrishna".

## AT OTHER PLACES

The birthday was also celebrated by Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Laksha, Benares City; Sri Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal, Hardwar; Sri Ramakrishna Math, Dacca; Sri Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Muthiganj, Allahabad; Sri Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Lucknow; Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Tamluk, Midnapur; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Basavangudi, Bangalore City; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Khar, Bombay; Sri Ramakrishna Math, Aminipur, Dacca; Sri Ramakrishna Vedanta Society, Calcutta; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Sylhet; Sri Ramakrishna Math, Kuala Lumpur, F.M.S.; Ramakrishna Mission Branch Centre, Narayanganj; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Nagpur; The Vivekananda Society, Jamshedpur; Sri Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Sarisha, Diamond Harbour; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Trivandrum; and by many other Maths, Ashramas, and societies in India, Burma, Ceylon, the Federated Malay States, the United States of America and other countries. We are sorry we are not able to publish all the reports that were received for want of space.

## NEWS &amp; REPORTS

## SWAMI PARAMANANDA

Swami Paramananda recently experienced an unexpected widening of his contact with the world and the public. A Radio broadcasting station has been erected on a property adjacent to the Ananda Ashrama. It is the first in La Crescenta Valley and its opening was made an event of great importance. The gentleman who has established the station called personally on the Swami and invited him to take a prominent part in its inauguration. A banquet was given to several hundred eminent residents of the valley and surrounding towns. At this the Swami was made one of the guests of honor as also one of the speakers—amongst whom were several Judges, the Mayor of Glendale and the President of

the Glendale Chamber of Commerce. The Swami's speech before the microphone was so forceful and well-chosen that it was afterwards declared by the announcer to be the best of the evening. The cordial appreciation expressed by all present was a testimony to the sympathy and interest which the Ashrama has awakened. The owner of the Radio has suggested that he would stretch a wire across to the Ashrama that the Swami's teaching may be broadcasted regularly.

The Sphere of Swami Paramananda's influence is expanding not only among those who hear and those who see, but also among those who are wrapped in the silence of deafness and those who walk in the shadow of blindness. The volume in his Practical Series entitled "Creative Power of Silence" has penetrated many unhearing ears and brought renewed courage and comfort. A lady, well-known in Social Service work in Boston lent a copy to a deaf friend. When she saw the wonderful effect it produced upon this one shut-in heart, she introduced it in a Deaf-Mute institution with which she was connected, and since then the book has had remarkable success among the deaf, as also among others.

#### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYAPITH, DEOGHAR.

We are in receipt of the Annual report of the Vidyapith for 1926 and are glad to note the considerable progress it has made during the year. The number of students on the roll was 53 as against 46 in the previous year. The staff consisted of one M. A., four B. As., and three undergraduates all of whom are monastic members of the Ramakrishna Mission. The instruction imparted to the boys was eminently suited to their physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual needs.

During the year under review the Vidyapith was removed to its new buildings and the opening ceremony was performed by His Holiness Srimat Swami Shivanandji Maharaj, the President of the Mission. A Night School was also started during the year.

The total receipts for the General Fund, including last year's balance of Rs. 1978-2-10½, were Rs. 13280-8-½ and the total disbursements amounted to Rs. 11193-2-10½, leaving a balance of Rs. 2087-5-2.

The Vidyapith stands in need of an office-room, a library-room, a prayer-hall, a guest-house and one more dormitory and a permanent fund of its own. It fervently appeals to the generous public for help.

Contributions may be sent to (i) Swami Shivananda, President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, Dt. Howrah or (ii) Swami Saradananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, 1, Mukherji lane, Bagh Bazar, Calcutta, or (iii) Swami Sadvabananda, Honorary Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, Vidyapith, Deoghar, Dt. Sonthal Pergs.















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